

BRANDING ICARUS:
THE CONSTRUCTION OF IDENTITY AND DIVERSITY AT
THE UNITED STATES AIR FORCE ACADEMY

BY
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APPROVAL

The undersigned certify that this thesis meets master's-level standards of research, argumentation, and expression.

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DISCLAIMER

The conclusions and opinions expressed in this document are those of the author. They do not reflect the official positions of the Australian Government, US Government, Australian Department of Defence, US Department of Defense, the Royal Australian Air Force, the United States Air Force, or Air University.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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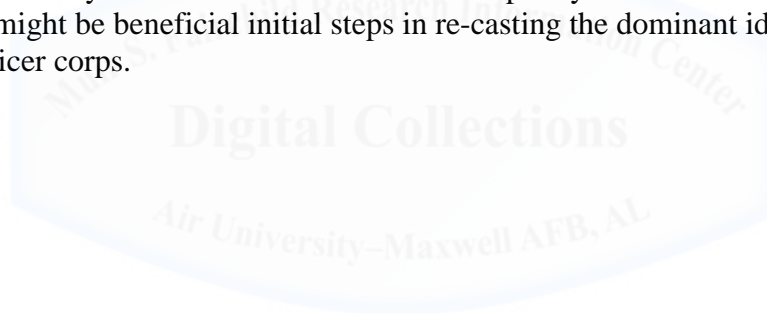
There are a number of people I would like to personally thank for helping guide me through the process of this research project. My thesis supervisor, Dr Stephen Chibotti, was instrumental in helping me frame a methodological approach to research at the US Air Force Academy. He was generous with dispensing his immense knowledge of the Academy, built from many years of association as a Cadet and then staff member, and was instrumental in facilitating the field research I was privileged to conduct. As a thesis supervisor, he gave me significant leeway in developing a theoretical approach that admittedly departs somewhat from the norm for internal military research programs. I greatly appreciated his tolerance and patience in supporting my theoretical excursions into occasionally 'ooky' territory, and I hope that by reframing the question of how diversity is possible in the military, this project might provide some grist for the mill of those seeking to build an inclusive Air Force.

I would also like to thank Dr John Farquhar from the Department of Military and Strategic Studies at the US Air Force Academy for his support and assistance during the period of field research I conducted in support of this project. As a graduate of the class of 1980 (the first class to include female Cadets) and current staff member, Dr Farquhar was in a unique position to provide a 'then and now' perspective that widened my understanding of Academy culture. I sincerely appreciated the generosity he showed with his time and the interest he exhibited in supporting my thesis research.

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ABSTRACT

Many of the arguments supporting diversity in the military focus on the instrumental benefits available to an organization that embraces differences. Viewed through this lens, diversity risks becoming another “to do,” and prioritized according to available resources. Arguing for diversity primarily from the basis of the “capability argument” also fails to challenge the as yet unresolved perceived tension between a military’s combat effectiveness, and its adherence to the values and laws of the state it protects. This thesis seeks to reframe the diversity debate by arguing that a diverse military reflective of the demography of society is a fundamental necessity in a Western liberal democracy. The paper uses sociological theory to posit that current approaches to diversity in the US Air Force overlook the role of identity in molding behavioral norms and influencing the ability of the organization to process and integrate difference. Using the US Air Force Academy as a case study, this thesis seeks to determine how identities are constructed in early officer training, and how these nascent identities might influence the overall levels of diversity within the organization. By blending quantitative and qualitative evidence, this project concludes that the US Air Force Academy constructs and cultivates exclusive identities that conflict with government initiatives to build a diverse and inclusive organization. The analysis concludes with a number of policy recommendations that the author believes might be beneficial initial steps in re-casting the dominant identity of the US Air Force officer corps.



A NOTE ON METHODOLOGY

This thesis incorporates qualitative data in an effort to provide depth to the analysis of identity in the US Air Force Academy. This data was collected during five focus groups with Cadets conducted at the Academy over the period 23 – 27 February 2015. The focus groups were made up of groups of between eight and ten Cadets from a particular year group. One group comprised freshman Cadets, while two focus groups consisted of both senior and sophomore Cadets. The aim of the focus groups was to build narratives relating to the Cadets' experience at the Academy in an effort to collect rich data that is otherwise absent from the quantitative data pertaining to each year group. Institutional Review oversight and approval for the project (protocol F50436-2014-012E) was provided by the Air Force Human Research Protection Program.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Cadets who took part in the focus groups for their disarmingly candid and frank approach to the discussions. I thoroughly enjoyed my time discussing the project with them and wish them all the best in their Air Force careers.



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Chapter 1

Introduction

This project began as the result of a number of instances in a career in which I was forced to pause and reflect on what it means to be a member of the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF). As a male Anglo-Celtic Australian growing up in Sydney, my childhood and upbringing were culturally privileged. It seemed unnecessary for me as a child to question what it meant to be Australian, as I was firmly situated within the dominant cultural paradigm. In the early years of my military career, the relative lack of diversity in the Australian Defence Force (ADF) of the 1990s offered little in the way to prompt any interest in the experience of those who sat outside this dominant cultural paradigm. Through my duties as an RAAF pilot, I was increasingly deployed to far-flung locations where, through juxtaposition, I became aware of myself as inhabiting a discrete cultural space. I rarely felt such cultural dislocation in Australia because, as a member of the dominant cultural group, my culture was invisible. Put simply, culture was made evident by others who somehow failed to reflect the dominant ideal. Gradually, through my experience of diversity, I became interested in exploring the reasons why minority rates of participation in the RAAF were so low, particularly in a nation such as Australia that promotes its multiculturalism as a positive attribute.¹

Operational service in Iraq and Afghanistan helped crystallize these ideas. One particular event served to direct my thoughts toward the role of identity in explaining the demographic nature of the military. In 2004 I was deployed in the Middle East Area of Operations (MEAO) in support of Australia's operations in Iraq. The Air Task Force of which I was a part was a lodger unit on a large US base that hosted various events throughout the week to keep the deployed population entertained. These events included visits from US-based entertainers, in a manner similar to the popular USO (United Service Organisations) shows of the Second World War. One particularly well-attended event was the "Operation: Let Freedom Wing Tour," which brought the Hooters Calendar

¹ Dr Tim Soutphommasane, "Multiculturalism and "Team Australia": A Speech to Community Relations Commission for a Multicultural NSW Symposium", *Australian Human Rights Commission*, <https://www.humanrights.gov.au/news/speeches/multiculturalism-and-team-australia-speech-community-relations-commission> (accessed 14 April 2015).

Girls and UC3, “a popular Hooters-sponsored singing group from the Tampa Bay area of Florida.”² Hooters is an American-based restaurant chain that declares itself to be in the business of “selling sex appeal,”³ the primary conduit of which is the “Hooters Girl,” a waitress whose uniform is designed to highlight the double *entendre* created by the trading name of “Hooters.” As a senior Hooters executive observed while remarking on his satisfaction at the success of “Operation: Let Freedom Wing”:

The show ended with a bang when UC3 sang ‘Anywhere USA’ accompanied by 6 flag waving Hooters Calendar Girls sporting Hooters’ latest Military appreciation uniform, featuring camouflage patterned shorts and a tank top with the line “Weapons of Mass Distraction” on the back. The show, which was designed to resemble the classic Bob Hope USO tours, was described by many troops as the most fun and best attended morale show in years. Hooters of America Vice President of Marketing, Mike McNeil, who acted as the show’s MC said, “It is an honor for the Hooters concept to be able to support the men and women in the service of our country. I was absolutely blown away by the positive reaction we received. I can’t imagine playing to a more appreciative audience.”⁴

The employment practices and marketing strategy of Hooters are not the points here. What was telling on reflection was the implicit assumption of a specific identity to which the content of the show appealed. Despite McNeil’s professing it to be an “honor” that the Hooters franchise was able to support both the men and “women in the service of our country,” the show clearly catered to the overwhelmingly male audience. This choice of touring *ensemble* effectively reinforced the assumed hegemonic norm of heterosexual masculinity within the US military; and, regardless of the rationale behind the choice, the assumption of a certain type of military identity was clear.

The cultivation of the masculine as an identity norm in the military is not always so spectacularly exhibited. It is also subconsciously reinforced under the guise of recognising and celebrating military traditions. For example, each year, freshman Cadets at the United States Air Force Academy (USAFA) deliberate over the selection of a class “Exemplar.” The Cadet Exemplar Program is designed as “an avenue for each Academy class

² The Original Hooters: Since 1983, “Hooters History: The 21st Century,” <http://www.originalhooters.com/saga/the-2000s/> (accessed 14 April 2015).

³ Kenneth L. Schneyer, “Hooting: Public and Popular Discourse about Sex Discrimination”, *University of Michigan Journal of Law Reform*, vol 31, 566.

⁴ The Original Hooters, “Hooters History”.

to honor and identify with a past military giant, alive or dead. It is designed to link our nation's rich heritage with our boundless future. As such, the heroes who are chosen epitomise the personal characteristics that each class seeks to emulate...The selected class exemplar not only becomes the Cadets' honorary class leader, but also the very namesake and identity of that particular class. Throughout the Cadets' career, the Exemplar becomes the focal point of inspiration for the Cadets as they prepare for their roles as Air Force officers and future leaders."⁵

Apart from the class of 2005, which chose General George S. Patton, Jr., all years have selected male aviators as their exemplars. Moreover, with the further exception of the Wright Brothers (Class of 2015 exemplars) all exemplars have distinguished themselves in combat. The process of selection involves nominations drawn from the entire class that are subsequently vetted by staff members with a short list re-presented to the class for a final vote. The resultant exemplar serves as a model for the Cadets: "Everyone wants to exemplify someone who's done their job extremely well under the worst situations that you could ever find yourself in...I think that's kind of a hallmark...a whole lot of these people are combat leaders, or a person who's distinguished themselves under combat conditions."⁶

While the list of exemplars spans the officer-rank spectrum - from 1st lieutenant to general - the absence of certain minority demographics prompts questions relating to the perceptions of an "ideal" airman. A likely explanation is that the absence of an African-American or female Exemplar is merely a reflection of the historically low levels of participation of these elements of society in the USAF. Indeed, the "common sense" nature of this reasoning scratches the surface of a deeper issue that this thesis seeks to address; whether targeted recruitment strategies and diversity policies are sufficient to alter the identity of an organization. Put another way, would the participation of more women or minorities in the USAF lead inexorably to an inclusive and diverse workforce that reflects the demography of society? In this project, I suggest that meaningful cultural change is only possible when the shared meanings that underpin USAF military identities are analyzed and judged as being either consistent or contrary to the principles of equity

⁵ U.S. Air Force Academy, "Fact Sheet: Cadet Exemplar Program", <http://www.usafa.af.mil/information/factsheets/factsheet.asp?id=9418> ,(accessed 19 March 2015).

⁶ Male sophomore Cadet, Focus Group with Air Force Academy Cadets, 24 February 2015.

that exist in a modern Western liberal society such as the USA. If cultural change is to mean more than merely reconstituting the distribution of minority members in an organization, then only in identifying and re-framing exclusive ideal identities will members exhibiting “divergent” social characteristics begin to feel a part of the team.

Recent scandals at military academies highlight the timeliness of this research. At the Australian Defence Force Academy in 2011, a male Cadet was found to have secretly filmed himself engaging in sexual acts with a female Cadet and streamed the video that was viewed live by a number of male Cadets in another room. The subsequent investigation led to the punishment of the Cadets involved. In the wake of the scandal, a former Chief of the Australian Army, Lieutenant General (Rtd) Peter Leahy, suggested that the Cadets’ conduct reflected cultural and behavioral norms that did not constitute “defence culture”: “Members of the press and other commentators should reconsider their unwarranted insinuation that this is ‘defence culture.’ The seven individuals involved have been at ADFA for barely two months. You don’t learn this sort of culture in that period of time. You bring it with you from your home, your school and the community. Australia as a whole is struggling with actions such as sexting, binge drinking and a general loss of the meaning of privacy, not just ADFA.”⁷

This seems a persuasive and reasonable argument, given the experience levels of the Cadets. However it sets aside the fact that joining the military involves a range of suitability testing that is designed to find the “right” people who possess the character, leadership potential, and intelligence to perform as commissioned officers. Unlike members of civilian residential colleges, (to which academies are often compared in an effort to contextualise the levels of sexual and other forms of harassment), significant amounts of tax dollars are expended in an effort to ensure we avoid recruiting people who do not reflect the shared values espoused by the military.⁸ This prompts a questioning of the process, and more specifically, whether we are recruiting wrongly, that is, incorrectly assessing the suitability of a candidate, or wrongly recruiting, filling a military force with

⁷ Peter Leahy, “These Cadets are Neither Officers Nor Gentlemen”, *The Age*, 12 April 2011, <http://www.theage.com.au/it-pro/these-Cadets-are-neither-officers-nor-gentlemen-20110411-1db0g.html>, (accessed 20 March 2015).

⁸ Rosa Brooks, “Is Sexual Assault Really an Epidemic?”, *Foreign Policy*, 10 July 2013, http://foreignpolicy.com/2013/07/10/is-sexual-assault-really-an-epidemic/?wp_login_redirect=0, (accessed 20 March 2015).

the wrong people. These are complex questions, and a search for answers must begin at first principles by questioning who we think we are as members of an air force. Moreover, LTGEN Leahy's observation that these Cadets exhibited attitudes that are rife in society should provide *greater* incentive to re-assess military culture because society forms the recruiting base for a liberal democratic nation.

Like many military organizations, the US Air Force is not reflective of broader US society. In itself, this is not particularly surprising. The exigencies of military service demand that its officer corps possesses a set of generalized attributes. In addition, the military's experiential accession model, combined with an "up or out" promotion system, establishes a consistent age-related triangle, with the majority of young members forming the base, which is then reduced to a much smaller number of mature general officers. This is unremarkable and predictable in an organization that demands its senior leadership have personal experience in the execution of the Air Force mission. In this way, it is fair to argue that an air force can never truly reflect society; and for some, this provides enough evidence to suggest that attempts to diversify in other areas waste valuable resources because complete reflection is unobtainable and in some cases, undesirable.⁹ But there are other areas in which the USAF fails to reflect society that are not as easily explained. For instance, African-Americans make up 13.2% of American society, and yet comprise only 6% of the USAF Officer Corps.¹⁰ Participation rates of women are even lower; despite outnumbering men in broader US society (50.8%), females comprise less than 20% of the USAF officer corps in the junior officer (2nd lieutenant - captain) ranks.¹¹ Moreover, female representation drops sharply in higher-rank cohorts. If the USAF is to fulfil the goal of "represent[ing] the country it defends," the reasons behind these low

⁹ George F. Will, "The Military Doesn't Reflect Society, and it's a Good Thing," *Observer-Reporter*, 23 November 1998.

¹⁰ United States Census Bureau, "State and County [sic] Quickfacts," <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/00000.html> (accessed 15 April 2015); Nelson Lim et al., *Improving Demographic Diversity in the U.S. Air Force Officer Corps*, (RAND Corporation: 2014), http://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/research_reports/RR400/RR495/RAND_RR495.pdf (accessed 14 April 2015), 3.

¹¹ Lim et al., *Improving Demographic Diversity*, 3.

levels of minority (for the remainder of this thesis, this label will also encompass females) participation need to be understood.¹²

This project explores the concept of a representative military through the lens of identity. In doing so, I will apply a broadly sociological framework in addressing the demography of the US Air Force. In essence, this thesis seeks to chart a new direction in the study of military sociology, one that aims to unmask the role of identity in influencing the membership characteristics of the US Air Force. The questions this study asks are not new. Official discourse has sought to address the diversification of the US Air Force since the first attempts at racial and gender integration in the Armed Forces. But in answering these questions, this thesis departs from the well-worn discourse centering on affirmative action and diversity quotas by reframing the lens through which diversity is viewed. Official discourse frequently posits the value of diversity in purely instrumental terms: “There is no other country in the world so widely diverse, yet so deeply committed to being unified, as the United States of America. The challenges we face today are far too serious, and the implications of failure far too great, for our Air Force to do less than fully, and inclusively, leverage our Nation’s greatest strength: its remarkably diverse people. Across the force, diversity of background, experience, demographics, perspective, thought and even organization are essential to our ultimate success in an increasingly competitive and dynamic global environment. As airpower advocates, we must be culturally competent and operationally relevant to effectively accomplish our various missions.”¹³

In contrast to this capability argument, the foundation upon which the ensuing analysis will form is that a societally reflective military is essential in a Western liberal democracy from a normative, human rights perspective. In addition to diversifying to achieve capability benefits, we should establish an inclusive environment because a failure to do so would contradict the “American” values of liberty and freedom of the individual. Framing diversity in a purely instrumental manner risks making simply another

¹² United States Department of Defense, *The National Military Strategy of The United States of America 2011: Redefining America’s Military Leadership*, <http://www.defense.gov/pubs/2011-National-Military-Strategy.pdf> (accessed 14 April 2015) 16.

¹³ Deborah Lee James, General Mark A. Welsh and Chief Master Sergeant James A. Cody, “Memorandum for all Airmen: Air Force Diversity & Inclusion,” 4 March 2015, http://www.af.mil/Portals/1/documents/SECAF/FINALDiversity_Inclusion_Memo1.pdf (accessed 17 April 2015).

commodity that is prioritized according to resources. More importantly, a capability argument is potentially problematic due to its being “Janus-faced.”¹⁴ Arguments focusing on capability are often deployed to argue *against* diversity in the military, either to fend off the “reduction” in military effectiveness by integrating “weak” females, or a broader argument against diversity itself by suggesting that it will lower unit cohesion.¹⁵ This thesis will examine the capability argument to highlight why it is a sub-optimal platform on which to base an organization’s diversity policy. This idea will be developed through an analysis of the tension between instrumental effectiveness and the rule of law and culminate in an exploration of the forces that legitimize a military organization in the eyes of modern Western societies.

Having explored the reasons why a democracy might seek to maintain a military that is reflective of society, this thesis will turn the focus onto the possible reasons why there are such low levels of participation from certain elements of society. More specifically, this thesis aims to peer behind the façade of the military in an effort to understand the inputs that result in the development of uniquely military identities. Furthermore, this project seeks to understand how servicepeople’s sense of who they are informs how they interact with their colleagues. Also of interest are how these interactions contribute to the construction of behavioral norms that define the “military culture,” understood as “what is important for interaction by being relevant to goal-oriented activity...representing the cumulative experience of a social unit.”¹⁶ This framing of culture in the context of the past may provide a useful paradigm to help build an understanding of why cultural change can be difficult to enact. By mobilizing a cumulative concept of culture, a primary goal of this project will be to explore the reasons behind the historically low levels of minority participation in the officer corps of the United States Air Force. Although the policy recommendations will be primarily focussed on the USAF, this project has broader

¹⁴ Although used in a slightly different sense, Parco and Levy mobilize the term to indicate the opposing tensions between societal norms and military effectiveness. James E. Parco and David A. Levy, "Preface," in *Attitudes Aren't Free : Thinking Deeply About Diversity in the Us Armed Forces*(Maxwell Air Force Base, AL: Air University Press, 2010).

¹⁵ Robert L. Maginnis, *Deadly Consequences : How Cowards Are Pushing Women into Combat* (Washington, D.C.: Regnery Publishing, 2013), 119.; Elizabeth Kier, "Homosexuals in the U.S. Military: Open Integration and Combat Effectiveness," *International Affairs* 23, no. 2 (1998): 6.

¹⁶ Sheldon Stryker, *Symbolic Interactionism : A Social Structural Version* (Caldwell, NJ: Blackburn Press, 2002), 56.

strategic relevance to other air forces and indeed any organization facing the challenge of building an inclusive workplace in the face of strong cultural norms that favor the preservation of the *status quo*.

It is important from the outset to understand the vital nature of an institutional identity in the military. In other occupational fields, a company may operate relatively successfully in the absence of a cohesive identity, however, in the military, the exigencies of combat provide a compelling requirement for cohesion. Unlike many civilian occupations, air force members are expected to work together in situations of significant gravity. While air force personnel may not primarily operate on the “frontline” in the same way as an army infantry soldier, they regularly perform duties that affect the lives of a great number of people both within and outside their organization. This thesis seeks to bring the concept of military identity to the fore in an effort to re-conceptualize the argument for diversity and inclusion in the US Air Force.

The study will be comprised of three major sections. First, a literature review will survey the current landscape of military sociology and analyze some of the key questions that are being asked by researchers. This section will serve a dual purpose of sketching the landscape against which the ensuing analysis will be placed, while also identifying key gaps in the literature that this project aims to fill. The literature review is deliberately international in its scope, acknowledging the work that has taken place in some other Western liberal democracies in an effort to draw meaningful lessons from outside the paradigm of the US. As a serving member of the RAAF, I am familiar with the landscape of the Australian military sociology discourse and will use related sources in an effort to broaden the scope of the argument and underscore some of the similarities encountered in the Australian Government’s approach to the management of diversity in the Australian Defence Force (ADF). That said, despite many parallels, Australian and US military cultures diverge in many areas. Thus, the limitations of straightforward comparisons between the RAAF and the USAF should be understood.

In addition to its international flavor, the literature review will also be interdisciplinary with a particular focus on sociology and social psychology. A secondary aim of this project is to make a unique and meaningful contribution to the discourse and thereby some of the more conventional approaches to military diversity will be avoided. In par-

ticular, literature from the discipline of Organisational Behavior will not be drawn into the analysis of this thesis. This may open the project to criticism, but the ubiquity of organisational approaches to the problem of diversity in the military, combined with the slow increase in minority participation, hint at the limitations of this approach in providing comprehensive solutions. The enduring nature of the difficulties encountered in the integration of minority members in the USAF seems to disprove the suggestion that any single approach employed thus far has provided a sustainable answer. Far from searching for the golden solution, this project seeks to explore previously uncharted territory in an effort to provide some useful strategies that can complement the current initiatives deployed by the US Government and US Air Force senior leadership.

The second section will present a number of theoretical frameworks that will be subsequently mobilized to examine the creation and operation of military identities in the USAF, specifically at the US Air Force Academy. The theories underpinning this section focus on the role of presentation and performance of ideal identities, and have been selected for their utility in highlighting and explaining the enduring nature of military culture while also suggesting some avenues to mold this culture in different forms.

The third section will conduct this analysis, drawing data from a variety of sources, including qualitative data gathered over the course of five focus groups carried out at the USAFA over the period 24-26 February 2015. These focus groups consisted of Cadets drawn from across the spectrum of class years in mixed gender groups, apart from one group that was exclusively male. In addition to analyzing these data through the lens of the theory presented in Chapter Three, qualitative data-analysis methods such as content analysis will be used to examine how the Cadets' language is mobilized when discussing matters of identity. This study's emphasis will be primarily on the qualitative data to help support the argument. While quantitative data is useful in sketching the diversity landscape, I argue that a more meaningful understanding of military culture can be gained through a close analysis of the dialog and narratives transmitted by members of the culture. The focus groups convened in the process of preparing this thesis were beneficial in helping unveil these narratives, and qualitative data drawn from various other publications will also be presented in an effort to build an understanding of how Cadets and staff at the Academy construct and assess their identities.

The concluding chapter will tie together the threads of this analysis, while also making a number of recommendations pertaining to the future direction of Air Force diversity and inclusion policy. As a serving member of the Royal Australian Air Force, I am aware that my position as an outsider influences the credibility that may be applied to this work. It is possible however, that those outside the system might be equally capable of identifying potential avenues for progress in the area of cultural change, as those within the system.

In addressing the apparent dichotomy between *justifiable* discrimination, such as the imposition of certain qualifying attributes such as educational and physiometric for potential aircrew, and other forms, official US Air Force policy outlines four broad types of diversity: demographic, cognitive/behavioral, organizational/structural, and global.¹⁷ Demographic diversity is defined as “inherent or socially defined personal characteristics,” including sex, age and race.¹⁸ Cognitive/behavioral diversity describes “differences in styles of work, thinking, learning and personality,” while Organizational/structural Diversity covers “background characteristics affecting interaction, including Service, component, and occupation/career field.”¹⁹ Finally, global diversity describes the “intimate knowledge of and experience with foreign languages and cultures, inclusive of both citizen and non-citizen personnel, exchange officers, coalition partners, and foreign nationals with whom we interact as part of a globally engaged Air Force.”²⁰ This analysis will be limited to those types of diversity that are least changeable, namely demographic and global. These constitute what might be termed as “first-order” types of diversity because they are the most visible and tangible. A person’s sex or skin color is almost certain to be cognitively processed prior to any “differences in styles of work, thinking, learning and personality”; and in some organizations with a strongly formed and idealized identity, it may prove difficult to even proceed beyond these first-order considerations. In these instances, a numerical adjustment of the extant levels of minority representation, through the implementation of affirmative-action policies, for instance, may not be sufficient to enact lasting cultural change. This is true because those exhibiting demographic diversity

¹⁷ United States Air Force Policy Directive (AFPD) 36-70, *Diversity*, 13 October 2010, 2.

¹⁸ AFPD 36-70, 2.

¹⁹ AFPD 36-70, 2.

²⁰ AFPD 36-70, 2.

that appears misaligned with the “ideal” risk alienation or being assigned a worth, with correspondingly limited career prospects, that reflects their perceived value. In an organization such as the USAF that prioritizes the attraction, recruitment, development and retention of “diverse individuals,” strategies that focus on the bolstering of numbers rather than producing an inclusive environment may succeed in attracting and recruiting; but they will fall short of developing and retaining.²¹

The experience of female pilots in the RAAF may serve as an example. In stark contrast with the USAF, to date, there is yet to be a fully qualified, operational female fighter pilot in the RAAF, despite the specific ban on women undertaking this role being lifted in the early 1990s.²² Other air forces have had considerably greater success in this area; and while the relative size of the RAAF is a factor, the absence of female participation in this particular vocational stream in Australia seems anomalous. The Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF), which is similar in size to the RAAF, graduated its first two female fighter pilots in 1989. The existence of a narrow talent pool is a common explanation; but it is statistically unlikely, given that much smaller air forces have graduated females in this role. The hypothesis of this project is that this example may constitute an instance of a hidden structural barrier that may be explained by the existence of exclusive identities within the RAAF that discourage female participation in this role. This discouragement may not be overt, in fact it is likely to manifest itself in an unconscious way; but the result is the creation and reinforcement of an ideal identity that serves to homogenise the organization’s demographic.

Understandably, the integration of women into the military has been a major focus for civilian and military leadership in the US. The various sexual-assault scandals have received wide coverage in the media; and there is an urgent need to bring about enduring cultural change to reduce the instances of sexual discrimination, harassment, and violence. While the status of women in the military has served to highlight the key thematic approach of this thesis, they are only one minority. The subsequent analysis will

²¹ United States Air Force, *Diversity Strategic Roadmap*, (Air Force Global Diversity Division, AF/A1DV: 2014), <http://www.af.mil/Portals/1/documents/diversity/diversity-strategic-roadmap.pdf> (accessed 15 April 2015), 2.

²² Mark Dodd, “Women: RAAF Wants You For Its Top Guns”, *The Australian*, <http://www.theaustralian.com.au/national-affairs/defence/women-raaf-wants-you-for-its-top-guns/story-e6frg8yo-1225771738475> (accessed 15 April 2015).

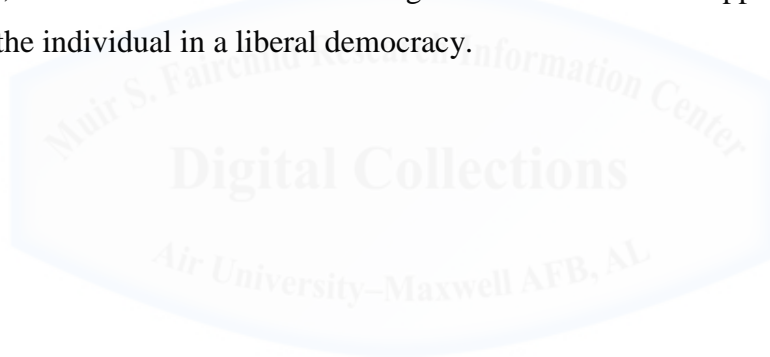
also consider how military identities, through the development of related behavioural norms, can create exclusive identities that serve to marginalise other types of minority groups. Furthermore, by enlarging the focus within the framework of demographic diversity, the experience of religious and ethnic minorities will also be considered. As with women, the military does not reflect the religious and ethnic makeup of broader American society, and this project will consider the reasons why this might continue to be the case, despite significant attention to the recruitment and development of minority groups within the USAF.

Finally, it seems prudent to provide a word of caution. While the 2011 US National Defense Strategy has a clear goal of seeking to build a military that reflects civil society, it should be acknowledged that there are a number of reasons, many that are outside the control of the military, why this may not be possible.²³ In addition to exploring the ways in which the military *can* support and generate meaningful cultural change, this thesis will also consider the more intractable problems that stymie efforts to diversify the US Air Force. As LTGEN Leahy observed, social influences from the broader civilian population permeate the military in an all-volunteer force. For example, the specific educational requirements to gain entry to the USAF Academy may be more challenging to obtain for members of disadvantaged demographics, and quantitative data will be presented to consider how powerfully this affects the demography of the military. But ultimately there is much that can be done within the organization. A central argument of this thesis is that while significant progress has been made in the realm of cultural change in recent years, these changes have been applied in an organization without a concrete understanding of its foundational identity. By situating equity of participation in the military as a fundamental human right, this analysis will argue that a military organization must do all it can to remove barriers to minority membership. Simply bolstering the numbers of minority members is only a partial solution, and may serve to increase the risk of failure if the foundational identity of the organization is unable to process a diverse workforce.

Despite the efforts of military and civilian leadership over the course of many years, the United States Air Force continues to have a problem attracting, recruiting, de-

²³ US DoD, *National Military Strategy 2011*, 16.

veloping and retaining “diverse” members of society. Put more simply, the USAF does not fully meet the expectations of the 2011 National Military Strategy that states “an all volunteer force must represent the country it defends.”²⁴ This is not to say that significant and effective work has not taken place in building an inclusive and diverse workplace. On the contrary, the existence of these efforts makes it reasonable to suggest that a different perspective is necessary to complement the work that has been done in other areas in order to maximize the chances of building a reflective organization. This study aims to provide such a perspective by pulling at the façade of the Air Force Academy in an effort to uncover the fundamental identities that inform the broader culture of the American Airman. In doing so, the intent is to analyze whether the basis of these identities is compatible with the establishment of an equitable and inclusive workplace. More importantly, this analysis will argue that diversity is not only necessary to achieve certain capability outcomes, but it is also critical to ensuring an environment that supports the basic human rights of the individual in a liberal democracy.



²⁴ US DoD, *National Military Strategy 2011*, 16.

Chapter 2

Military Identities: A Literature Review

This chapter will review the key literature within the military sociology discourse, in an effort to situate this project's analysis of military identities. This review will also negotiate a number of distinct but related discourses directly related to the armed forces, military sociology, and "armed forces and society" to provide an entry point for the analysis into the specific area of military sociology in which the project belongs. Additionally, as Paul Higate and Ailsa Cameron observe, *military* sociology is "located on the margins of the discipline," and it is therefore necessary to examine the literature in related fields that buttress these margins.¹ Thus, literature from the intersecting fields of social psychology, identity studies, and cultural studies will be reviewed, providing a cross-disciplinary texture that aims to increase the depth and richness of the analysis.

Before embarking on an examination of the key literature relevant to this project, it is prudent to clarify some terms. Although they are often used interchangeably,² Steve Matthewman posits a distinction between the terms "Military Sociology," and "Sociology of the Military." The latter, he argues, is a field of inquiry that "sees the manifold ways in which society at large is militarized,"³ whereas military sociology is "inner directed, considering the military as its own society."⁴ As this project is primarily interested in the ways in which identities are formed within the military and the emergent behavioral norms, it fits broadly into the field of military sociology as delineated by Matthewman. That said, the boundaries separating military sociology and the sociology of the military blur at the margins; and despite military sociology's primary aim being a study *within* the organization, its existence as a representative body of the state prompts wider examination of the external forces that influence and guide the military way. Thus, while situating

¹ Paul Higate and Ailsa Cameron, "Reflexivity and Researching the Military," *Armed Forces & Society* 32, no. 2 (2006): 221.

² Giuseppe Carforio, "Introduction" in *Handbook of the Sociology of the Military*, ed. Giuseppe Carforio (New York, NY: Kluwer Academic/Plenum Publishers, 2003), 4.

³ Dr Steve Matthewman and Aramiha Harwood, "Sociology and the Military", (Conference Paper, The Australian Society of Sociologists Conference, Melbourne, VIC, 2008), <https://www.tasa.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2011/05/Matthewman-Steve-Session-15-PDF.pdf>, (accessed 18 March 2015).

⁴ Matthewman and Harwood, "Sociology and the Military".

the analysis firmly within the discourse of military sociology, this review will cast a wider net in order to understand the external dynamics that reinforce the understanding of the military as a distinct society.

As outlined above, this review will take a multidisciplinary approach to sketching the landscape of military sociology today. It will proceed thematically, presenting some of the key questions that have been raised in the field, traversing a number of broad areas: the relationship between the military and the state, the military as an institution or an occupation, the social psychology of group interaction, the dynamics of minority integration, and the concept of military legitimacy.

The State of Military Sociology

In 1981 Gwyn Harries-Jenkins and Charles Moskos described the study of the sociology in the the military as being “something of an anomaly in the sociological discipline [where] research is still markedly less than is to be found in other fields of sociology.”⁵ A number of factors that may have coalesced to bring about this paucity of research. First, when compared to the military as an institution, the discipline of sociology is a relative newcomer. Peter Berger argues that the genesis of sociology “as a discipline of that name” emerged in the nineteenth century, and it is possible that the military has evaded significant sociological study due to being otherwise legitimized by millennia of development.⁶ Secondly, and more interestingly, Harries-Jenkins and Moskos suggest that the apparent avoidance of study of the military stems from debate as to the worth and use of any findings. The concern is one of professional ethics, particularly apparent in Government-sponsored research, prompting the question: “Why study the military if the result of investigations can be utilized by armed forces to strengthen their position within society?”⁷ Thirdly, as suggested by Harries-Jenkins and Moskos, a tradition exists whereby military research is conducted “from within”; and while this research spans the technical and personnel-related spectrum, it is more usually carried out for data-gathering purposes rather than for critical inquiry.⁸ Finally, as Gerhard Kümmel argues, the military is a particularly complex social environment to research and analyze, which prompts a

⁵ Gwyn Harries-Jenkins and Charles C. Moskos, "Introduction," *Current Sociology* 29, no. 3 (1981): 1.

⁶ Peter L. Berger and Brigitte Berger, *Sociology : A Biographical Approach* (New York, NY: Basic Books, 1975), 23.

⁷ Harries-Jenkins and Moskos, "Introduction," 2.

⁸ Harries-Jenkins and Moskos, "Introduction", 3.

multidisciplinary approach, and thus research into the social aspects of the military is diffused across a number of discourses, including “political science [...] history and even psychology.”⁹ This project aims to bridge some of the gaps separating these discourses in an effort to bring some cohesion and direction to the analysis of US military sociology with specific focus on the US Air Force Academy.

David Segal and Morton Ender point to the 1960s “as the period of initial emergence of sociology in military academies cross-nationally, reflecting in part the emergence of military sociology as a subfield within the broader international sociological community.”¹⁰ For example, Military Academies in Greece and the Netherlands introduced courses in sociology in the 1960s.¹¹ Interestingly, the formal study of military sociology is yet to emerge in Australia, and in light of recent reviews and initiatives aimed at enacting “cultural change” within the military, it seems odd that this remains the case.¹² This is particularly so in light of Segal and Ender’s observation that, “it appears that in general, sociology emerges stronger at academies immediately following moments of radical social change. Such changes include internal changes following significant curriculum reform or scandals and external changes including national security shifts, new military missions for the nation, or the lifting of particular bans.”¹³

The Military and The State

An understanding of the place of the military professional in both society and the military is useful in order to determine how military identities are formed and developed, and how these identities influence norms and behaviors in the organization. Two major works that explore the dynamic relationship among the military practitioner, the military, and society are Samuel Huntington’s *The Soldier and the State* and Morris Janowitz’s *The Professional Soldier*. Huntington and Janowitz are key contributors to “The American School” of military sociology proposed by Giuseppe Carforio. This school appeared

⁹ Gerhard Kümmel, “A Soldier Is a Soldier Is a Soldier!? The Military and Its Soldiers in an Era of Globalization”, in *Handbook of the Sociology of the Military*, ed. Giuseppe Carforio, (New York, NY: Kluwer Academic/Plenum Publishers, 2003), 417.

¹⁰ David R. Segal and Morten G. Ender, “Sociology in Military Officer Education,” *Armed Forces & Society* 35, no. 1 (2008): 6.

¹¹ Segal and Ender, “Sociology in Military Officer Education”, 7.

¹² Such as the Australian Human Rights Commission’s 2012 *Review into the Treatment of Women in the Australian Defence Force*.

¹³ Segal and Ender, “Sociology in Military Officer Education”, 11.

as the military “turned to the social sciences” to help solve some of the issues brought about by the rapid mobilization of an enormous number of US citizens in the Second World War.¹⁴ Through their exploration of a common problem - how the military should interact with broader society - Huntington and Janowitz arrive at two very different models of the military professional. Huntington argues that an intrinsic separation should exist between the military and society due to a fundamental difference between the “military ethic” and the attitudes and values of civilian society.¹⁵ To illustrate, he juxtaposes the landscape of the town of Highland Falls, with the nearby US Military Academy:

[t]he buildings form no part of a whole: they are simply a motley, disconnected collection of frames coincidentally adjoining each other, lacking common unity or purpose. On the military reservation the other side of South Gate, however, there exists a different world. There is ordered serenity. The parts do not exist on their own, but accept their subordination to the whole. Beauty and utility are merged in gray stone. [...] West Point is a community of structured purpose, one in which the behavior of men is governed by a code, the product of generations. There is little room for presumption and individualism [...] Modern man may well find his monastery in the Army.¹⁶

By contrast, Janowitz maintains that the military is a dynamic and evolving social entity that must remain responsive to the requirements and demands of society’s values.¹⁷ Indeed, in Janowitz’s model, the military “is designed to be compatible with the traditional goals of democratic political control...[the military professional] is integrated into civilian society because he shares its common values.”¹⁸ These two models conceptualize the military professional in starkly different ways, and the tension between integrated and exclusionary models has important ramifications for the development of military identities in either.

Thus the question with which Janowitz and Huntington grapple revolves around the relative importance of two factors in a military organization: its functional or instru-

¹⁴ Carforio *Handbook of the Sociology of the Military*, 417.

¹⁵ Samuel P. Huntington, *The Soldier and the State; the Theory and Politics of Civil-Military Relations* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1957), 64.; Harries-Jenkins and Moskos, "Introduction," 10.

¹⁶ Huntington, *The Soldier and the State*, 465.

¹⁷ Morris Janowitz, *The Professional Soldier, a Social and Political Portrait* (Glencoe, ILL.: Free Press, 1960), 420.

¹⁸ Janowitz, *The Professional Soldier*, 440.

mental purpose, “the specialists on violence” as proposed by Harold Lasswell, and the nature of the organization as a legitimate “representative” of the government.¹⁹ This nexus was not lost on Huntington: “The military institutions of any society are shaped by two forces: a functional imperative stemming from the threats to the society’s security and a societal imperative arising from the social forces, ideologies, and institutions dominant within the society. Military institutions which reflect only social values may be incapable of performing effectively their military function. On the other hand, it may be impossible to contain within society military institutions shaped purely by functional imperatives.”²⁰

Huntington therefore identifies the balance as broadly zero-sum - in order for a military to embrace societal values, its utility must necessarily diminish, or conversely, to reach its optimal level of functionality, the military must remain separate from society in certain senses. But Huntington’s argument rests on questionable logic. Through holding the mandate for inter-state organized violence, the military must remain “subordinate to the statesman.”²¹ In a Western liberal democracy, such as the US, the rule of law governs the conduct of both individuals and institutions. If no entity or individual is “above the law,” it follows that a state organization such as the military, regardless of its purpose, must align insofar as possible with the “goals of democratic political control.”²² Therefore, it is imperative that the military reflect the values and norms of the government it serves. Viewed in this light, rather than choosing a point on the functional/societal spectrum, the challenge for the military becomes how to maximize both. That said, if compromise becomes necessary, the rule of law would suggest that it is the functional aspect of the military that should concede. Put more simply, if the option between violating the agreed values of a given society is balanced against a reduction in the efficacy of a given strategy, the values should be upheld.²³ This is a contested concept, and there are many who would argue the case that the military benefit of group cohesion outweighs the cost of transgressing civilian social values and norms. As Jim Webb, a former United States

¹⁹ Harold D. Lasswell, “The Garrison State,” *American Journal of Sociology* 46, no. 4 (1941): 457.

²⁰ Huntington, *The Soldier and the State*, 2.

²¹ Huntington, *The Soldier and the State*, 57.

²² Janowitz, *The Professional Soldier*, 440.

²³ Dianne Feinstein, “Foreword,” in Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, *Senate Select Committee on Intelligence: Committee Study of the Central Intelligence Agency’s Detention and Interrogation Program*, 2.

Secretary of the Navy who later became a US Senator, observed in relation to his treatment at the US Naval Academy:

The next night, after physically running me to exhaustion, he [an upper-classman, or senior Midshipman] and three others took turns beating me with a cricket bat, telling me they would stop if I admitted it hurt. Finally, they broke the bat on my ass. [...] [W]hen I got up at 5:30 the next morning and began preparing to enter that man's room another time, I knew something about myself that I could never have learned in any other way. That may seem a sadistic and barbaric way to learn self truths, and I would not suggest a reinstatement of plebe year to that extreme, but I will say this: When I watched 51 of my men become casualties over seven weeks in Vietnam, and when I sat down next to number 51 and cried like a baby, I'd been there before. It was a lot easier to pick up and keep going, and by then I was not merely Jim Webb, plebe, trying to survive a morning of a malicious upperclassman; I was a Marine platoon commander.²⁴

The suggestion that illegal acts, in this case assault, can have legitimate purpose in the military forms the basis of the broader argument that military effectiveness can trump the embracing of society's values and behavioral norms. The dynamics of this argument will be explored throughout this thesis; however for the purposes of this literature review it should be noted that there is broad acceptance that entities representing a government - such as the military - must reflect its normative framework of values.²⁵

Institution or Occupation?

A related thread of research in the military sociology addresses the question of whether the military constitutes an institution or an occupation. Moskos argues that evidence exists of a shift in the military away from being legitimated by "values and norms"²⁶ toward an organization legitimated by market forces. In response, Janowitz, while acknowledging the ongoing "civilianization" of the military, a concept presented in *The Professional Soldier*, refutes Moskos' suggestion that this has developed into a "zero-sum game"²⁷—an either/or construct. Disagreements notwithstanding, the important

²⁴ Jim Webb, "Women Can't Fight," in *Washingtonian*, 1 November 1979, <http://www.washingtonian.com/articles/people/jim-webb-women-cant-fight/indexp2.php> (accessed 2 December 2014).

²⁵ Dianne Feinstein, "Foreword," 2.

²⁶ Charles C. Moskos, "From Institution to Occupation: Trends in Military Organization," *Armed Forces & Society* 4, no. 1 (1977): 42.

²⁷ Morris Janowitz, "From Institutional to Occupational: The Need for Conceptual Continuity," *Armed Forces & Society* 4, no. 1 (1977): 53.

point on which both scholars agree relates to the increased civilian influences that have prompted a renegotiation of the important values and skills within in a military organization, moving away from the “heroic” ideal toward a “managerial” model. A change in emphasis on the value of certain attributes in an organization has necessary follow-on effects to the establishment and cultivation of identities within that group.

The recent debate surrounding pay in the Australian Defence Force (ADF) in 2014 provides an interesting study of the relative arguments for and against the military constituting an occupation or an institution and highlights the problematic relationship between the “heroic” and “managerial” images of military identity. Public comments made by serving ADF members in relation to a pay raise that failed to meet expectations reflected much of Moskos’ argument that the military is moving toward an organization that is legitimized by market forces. Moskos points to the historical trend that, while the military has generally received lower levels of remuneration than the civilian labor force, although the unique nature of military service makes direct comparisons of salary difficult, this has traditionally been offset by other benefits, such as subsidized housing and allowances to compensate for unusual and dangerous duty.²⁸ A steady reduction in these benefits in recent years has been accompanied by an equally steady increase in the salary of ADF members over the same period, thereby charting a course toward an “equal-pay-for-equal-work” system similar to civilian occupational organizations. The debate presents an interesting paradox in which an attempt is made to conflate the heroic and managerial images, serving to highlight a tension that lies at the heart of constructing a military identity.²⁹ In the debate, the heroic image is mobilized in order to argue for pay and conditions that reflect market-based considerations. As Senator Jackie Lambie recently said, “I’m not going to stand silently and fail to act, as this Liberal / National Party government steals money, holidays and entitlements from those who are ready to fight and die to protect us from our enemies, who right now, are knocking at Australia’s door [...] Our ADF heroes didn’t die so that selfish politicians could take what they pleased from the public purse, while soldiers, who risked their lives to protect our freedoms, are treated like dogs and thrown scraps from the nation’s table. It’s possible to honor the dead and at

²⁸ Moskos, “From Institution to Occupation,” 42.

²⁹ Mark Thomson, “Graph of the Week: ADF Pay”, *The Strategist: The Australian Strategic Policy Institute Blog*, <http://www.aspistrategist.org.au/graph-of-the-week-2/> (accessed 11 March 2015).; *ibid.*, 43.

the same time, fight like hell for the living. All Australian politicians must live up to the ANZAC legend not off it.”³⁰

Managing Heroic Identity

The paradoxical link between the heroic and managerial images was stated even more explicitly by a serving member, who, speaking under condition of anonymity, highlighted how the tension between the images has an effect on the perception of military identity:

My identity as a Serving Member has taken some hits recently [...] they [the Australian Government] have given us a “pay rise” of 1.5% per year for the next few years. This is more than 1.5% below estimated inflation, and 140% less than the pay rise that politicians have awarded themselves in past years [...] if you want to attack me in the street because you disdain the fact that I am an Australian Soldier, then at the very least I can understand you [...] my own government disdains me and my fellow serving members, and it disdains us publicly and with thinly disguised contempt. I am an Australian Soldier and, for the first time in eleven years, I am thoroughly disgusted to be one.³¹

These statements hint at the complex way in which military identities are formed and cultivated. In short, in the examples above, the heroic image is mobilized as reason to validate a managerial image. Rather than constituting polar opposites on a spectrum, they are manifested here as two sides of the same coin. The heroic image, more neatly encapsulating “the warrior ethic,” is often the focal point in literature exploring military identities.³² The comments above, however, indicate that the civilianization of the organization, manifested through a belief that military wages should be tied to market forces—in this case, inflation, as observed by Moskos and Janowitz also has an important role to play in the development and management of military identities.³³

³⁰ Media Statement of Senator Jackie Lambie, in “Media Statement: Sen.Lambie Orders Drafting of Private Members’ Bill on ADF Pay”, <http://www.standto.org/resources/msbs/469-media-statement-sen-lambie-orders-drafting-of-private-members-bill-on-adf-pay> (accessed 19 November 2014). It should be noted that Senator Lambie is a former ADF soldier.

³¹ Statement of an anonymous Australian Army soldier, in “Why I’m Ashamed to be an Australian Soldier: Digger speaks out on military wages”, <http://www.news.com.au/technology/innovation/why-im-ashamed-to-be-an-australian-soldier-digger-speaks-out-on-military-wages/story-fnpjxnk-1227114540290> (accessed 20 November 2014).

³² Paul R. Higate, “‘Soft Clerks’ and ‘Hard Civvies’: Pluralizing Military Masculinities”, in *Military Masculinities: Identity and the State*, ed. Paul R. Higate (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 2003), 27.

³³ Janowitz, “From Institutional to Occupational,” 53., Moskos, “From Institution to Occupation,” 47.

But an even more interesting point raised in the last citation is the relative *value* that is attributed to the managerial image. As the soldier points out, the pay case prompted him “for the first time in eleven years” to speak out concerning his “disgust” at being an Australian Soldier.³⁴ Rather than a series of public scandals, including large numbers of allegations of institutional sexual abuse, prompting a rethink of his military identity, or even physical attacks on his person, a challenge to the heroic image that he states he would “understand,” it took an apparent reduction in the value attributed to him by his employer, the Australian Government, to make him question his pride in the organization. This lends weight to Moskos’ argument that the military is moving toward representing an occupation to its members, in which remuneration is based on extant market forces, rather than an institution in which values and norms hold primacy in the creation of self-identity—values and norms that could be violated by the existence of exclusive and hegemonic identities that contributed to cultures of abuse within the organization.

The increasing interest shown by the general public in ANZAC Day commemorations in Australia, as well as Memorial Day gatherings in the US, show that, Moskos’ argument notwithstanding, the heroic image is still a powerful component of military identity. Thus, rather than choosing a particular paradigm, this project will explore the construction of military identities against the background of the paradoxical relationship between the heroic and the managerial image of the ideal military member.

Ingroups and Outgroups

Research within the field of social psychology has yielded outcomes that have direct relevance to an examination of the process of identity formation in military organizations. In particular, the work of Henri Tajfel and John Turner in investigating the phenomenon of group interaction has direct relevance to this project. Tajfel and Turner have conducted research focusing on how tension between groups emerges, and their investigation produced some interesting results. Intuitively, it would seem reasonable to argue that intergroup tension or discrimination is caused by discernible and specific differences between members of the “in-group” and those of the “out-group.”³⁵ This is reflected in

³⁴ Australian Army Soldier, “Why I’m Ashamed to be an Australian Soldier.”

³⁵ Henri Tajfel and John Turner, “An Integrative Theory of Intergroup Conflict,” in *Organizational Identity: A Reader*, ed. Mary Jo Hatch and Majken Schultz, Oxford Management Readers (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 57.

much of the popular media discourse on multiculturalism, but also in more scholarly thought such as Huntington's *Clash of Civilizations*.³⁶ Through this lens, it is the observable difference, such as skin color or religious belief, that is seen to cause the intergroup conflict. Tajfel and Turner's research sought to recreate the macro arena of real world group interactions on a micro scale in the laboratory. Using the observation that "[t]he laboratory analog of ethnocentrism is ingroup bias," as a departure point, they developed a series of experiments to test the boundaries of perceptions of group belonging.³⁷ Essentially, the experiments sought to create two groups established on purely arbitrary and meaningless grounds - described as "minimal groups" in the research - and then tested the behavior of the members.³⁸ Although all members remained anonymous to the others, including the members of their own group, and the assigned tasks involved no personal incentive to either the individual or the group, the findings indicated that the mere fact of being assigned as a member of a group carried enough meaning to influence behavior. As Tajfel and Turner point out, "[t]he basic and highly reliable finding is that the trivial, ad hoc intergroup categorization leads to in-group favoritism and discrimination against the out group."³⁹ This observation has important implications for an organization that seeks to diversify its membership. First, it suggests that, contrary to popular wisdom, perceptible *difference*, such as skin color or religious adherence, in itself is not a necessary input to the development of intergroup tension, rather the simple sense of *belonging* to a group can be enough to mold behavior in a manner that seeks to increase the group's "relative gains" with respect to a rival group.⁴⁰ Conversely though, if it is true, as Tajfel and Turner observe, that the essential criterion for belonging is that "the individuals concerned define themselves and are defined by others as members of the group," it follows that disenfranchised members of a group, such as women in certain military units or Muslims in some parts of western society, face structural barriers to achieving the status of a member, as defined by the group.⁴¹ These implications lie at the heart of this project, which seeks to

³⁶ Samuel P. Huntington, "The Clash of Civilizations?", *Foreign Affairs* Vol. 72, No. 3 (Summer, 1993), pp. 22-49.

³⁷ Henri Tajfel and John Turner, "An Integrative Theory of Intergroup Conflict", 56.

³⁸ Henri Tajfel and John Turner, "An Integrative Theory of Intergroup Conflict", 56.

³⁹ Henri Tajfel and John Turner, "An Integrative Theory of Intergroup Conflict", 57.

⁴⁰ Henri Tajfel et al., "Social Categorization and Intergroup Behaviour," *European Journal of Social Psychology* 1, no. 2 (1971): 172.

⁴¹ Henri Tajfel and John Turner, "An Integrative Theory of Intergroup Conflict", 59.

deconstruct the popular understanding of the necessary inputs to group cohesion, which, as the above research suggests, may be more rudimentary than popular discourse would concede, while also identifying whether fundamental barriers exist precluding minority representation in a military organization.

Philip Zimbardo's landmark "Stanford Prison Experiment" provided startling evidence of the power of group belonging. In the experiment, participants were randomly divided into two groups, prisoners and guards. The participants were all college students, many of whom knew each other. Despite the arbitrariness of the selection process, the participants very quickly assumed the role appropriate to their group membership, and the guards became increasingly improvisational in their response to the prisoners' non-conformist behavior, employing methods that included physical punishment.⁴² Zimbardo's experiment presents startling evidence supporting Tajfel and Turner's theory of minimal groups. Even though none of the participants had a particular interest in the outcome of the exercise—both prisoner and guard would receive \$15 each for participation—they quickly settled into "appropriate" roles according to their status, and by the fifth day, the behavior of the participants had degraded to such a level that Zimbardo decided to halt the experiment:

It is hard to imagine that such sexual humiliation [the guards had forced some prisoners to simulate sexual activity] could happen in only five days, when the young men all knew that this is a simulated prison experiment. Moreover, initially they all recognized that the 'others' were also college students like themselves. Given that they were all randomly assigned to play these contrasting roles, there were no inherent differences between the two categories. They all began the experience as seemingly good people [...] Yet, some guards have transformed into perpetrators of evil, and other guards have become passive contributors to the evil through their inaction. Still other normal, healthy young men as prisoners have broken down under the situational pressures, while the remaining surviving prisoners have become zombie-like followers.⁴³

This experiment showed that the power of group association—however arbitrarily organized—can create an environment in which individuals act in ways that violate

⁴² Philip G. Zimbardo, *The Lucifer Effect : How Good People Turn Evil* (New York, NY: Random House, 2007), 172.

⁴³ Zimbardo, *The Lucifer Effect*, 172.

broader societal norms but are consistent with shared understandings of the group's functional purpose. The dynamics of group behavior and norm creation will be explored later through the lens of social constructivism.

In many Western countries, and in particular in the US and Australia, there is a mystique surrounding the military that has the effect of stylizing the concept of an "ideal" military member.⁴⁴ These ideal identities are embraced to differing levels within the organization, but the fact that they exist as powerful cultural stereotypes raises the question of whether they reinforce the creation of coherent identities within the military. This project will analyze the dynamics of group participation in an effort to answer the question of whether these powerful cultural stereotypes influence the potential recruit at three stages: prior to joining (that is, "brought" to the organization) resulting in self-selection to serve in the Air Force; as a direct result of military basic training ("taught" by the organization); or produced in a more organic way through the informal process of military group formation during their time at the academy ("caught" through socialization processes in the organization). It may well be that identities are formed through a combination of all three, however a clearer understanding of the role each of these plays in the creation of military identities will provide a useful springboard into an investigation of potential ways to address behavioral norms that may have the effect of excluding minority participation in the military.

Military Masculinities

Much of the analysis of military identities has been informed by the broad and often amorphous concept of the "masculine." The juxtaposition of the masculine with the feminine, with an accompanying insinuation of relative worth to the military organization, permeates much of the recent discourse on the relative merits of opening up combat roles to females. As R. W. Connell observes, "'Masculinity' does not exist except in contrast with 'femininity.' A culture which does not treat women and men as bearers of polarized character types, at least in principle, does not have a concept of masculinity in the sense of modern European/American culture."⁴⁵

⁴⁴ The stylized image of the ANZAC soldier (As depicted on the cover of *The Anzac Book*; tall, muscular, tanned and Anglo-Saxon/Anglo-Celtic) in Australia is a typical example. *The Anzac Book* (London, UK: Cassell, 1916).

⁴⁵ R. W. Connell, *Masculinities* (Crows Nest, NSW: Allen & Unwin, 2005), 68.

The examination of the military through the lens of masculinities is, however, a relatively new development due to the largely unproblematic nature of Western military identity prior to the introduction of women into the armed services. As Jeff Hearn observes: “though for a long time gender was largely seen as a matter of and for women, men were generally seen as ungendered, natural, or naturalized. Men, masculinity, and men’s powers and practices were generally taken for granted [...] that these military persons are largely men has often either been simply accepted or gone unnoticed for other reasons [...] Indeed, many armies and other fighting forces of the world have been and still are armies composed exclusively of men, young men, and boys.”⁴⁶

Marcia Kovitz echoes this idea of normative invisibility by pointing to the “‘deafening silence’ concerning men’s service.”⁴⁷ At its core, this project is interested in uncovering the foundation on which the assumption of male military service is the norm. Thus an initial working hypothesis of this study is that the normalized view of combat—and by extension, military service itself—as a male domain has been socially constructed and is less informed by essential characteristics of either gender, but rather created through shared cultural ideas—through millennia of development—of the worth of the masculine contribution to violence as contrasted to that of the feminine.

As Hearn observed above, the Western military provided an exclusively male domain for hundreds of years prior to the introduction of women, and thus a strong culture of masculinity was constructed. This has generally proven unproblematic; however, the relatively recent developments in removing legal barriers to female participation in combat-related roles is serving to uncover the previously invisible and normative masculine culture within Western militaries. This is evident, for example, in recent discourses surrounding the reduction in “male-only” employment streams in the Australian military: “The coalition [consisting of the Liberal and National Parties in the Australian Parliament] has moved to clarify its position on female soldiers, saying that it supports gender equality in Australia’s armed forces, but it is maintaining the frontline is no place for

⁴⁶ Jeff Hearn, “Foreword: On Men, Women, Militarism, and the Military”, in Higate, *Military Masculinities*, xi.

⁴⁷ Marcia Kovitz, “The Roots of Military Masculinity in Highgate, *Military Masculinities*, 3. Kovitz draws this concept from Henri Lustiger-Thaler, “Remembering Forgetfully”, in *Resituating Identities: The Politics of Race, Ethnicity and Culture*, ed. Vered Amit-Talai and Carioline Knowles (Peterborough, UK: Broadview Press, 1996).

women. Opposition defence spokesman Bob Baldwin said that the Coalition believed in ‘equality of opportunity for women in the defence force. The Coalition, however, doesn’t agree with the placement of women into forces such as the SAS [the Special Air Service - a Special Forces component of the ADF], clearance divers, commandos, or frontline combat engineers,’ he said.”⁴⁸

The reasons given as to why the frontline is no place for a woman generally focus on generalized physiological differences, often combined with the emotional “cost” presented by females on the front line: “I don’t think the people of Australia would like to see their daughters, sisters, wives or female friends killed in disproportionate numbers to male service personnel,” Mr James [the Executive Director of the Australian Defence Association] said. “It’s a simple physicality thing. On the battlefield, academic gender equity theory doesn’t apply. The laws of physics and biomechanics apply.”⁴⁹

Occasionally, the specter of battlefield romance is included as a reason to keep combat for males. According to Brigadier Jim Wallace (Rtd), a former commander of the Special Air Service Regiment: “It’s about morale, it’s about team cohesion and in the Australian Army case, our army has always distinguished itself mainly because at the very core of each team, there’s a strong mateship, [...] Now introducing women into that team very much complicates that very important bond. On long military operations...having a woman in the team and with all the natural attraction we have between the sexes would invariably lead to attractions and to implications that you don’t have in an all-male team.”⁵⁰ In failing to consider the possibility of attraction forming between male unit members, these comments betray an additional assumption of heterosexuality as the norm for soldiers.

The subsequent removal of barriers to female participation in combat roles by the Australian Government was hailed as a paradigm shift in gender equality; however, the

⁴⁸ Stephanie Balogh, “Combat no place for Australian Defence Force Women”, *The Courier Mail*, 11 September 2009, <http://www.news.com.au/national/combat-no-place-for-australian-defence-force-women/story-e6frfkp9-1225771696676> (accessed 6 January 2014).

⁴⁹ Mark Dodd, “Brigadier backs women in combat”, *The Australian*, 10 September 2009, <http://www.theaustralian.com.au/national-affairs/defence/brigadier-backs-women-in-combat/story-e6frg8yo-1225771289637>, (accessed 6 January 2014).

⁵⁰ Statement of Brigadier Jim Wallace (Rtd), on Samantha Hawley’s Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) Radio report “Defence Scientists putting women to the test” *PM*, 9 September 2011, <http://www.abc.net.au/pm/content/2009/s2681304.htm>, (accessed 6 January 2014).

discourse attached to the methodology of implementation reflected the pervasive nature of the normalized masculine. This exemplifies Kovitz's view of the "deafening silences" that contribute to normalize the masculine in military organizations. Rather than reassess the appropriateness of the fitness requirements for the roles themselves, those who disagreed with female integration often demanded data to support whether women could meet the fitness tests for the roles.⁵¹ The underlying assumption was that the extant fitness requirements provided an accurate representation of the physical requirements of the role. While it may be the case that specialist military fitness tests, such as Special Forces barrier testing, accurately assess an individual's ability to carry out the duties inherent in a particular role, that these fitness tests have developed over time within the construct of a male-only domain should prompt a reconsideration of their efficacy in the light of female integration into the combat arms. As Admiral (Rtd) Chris Barrie, a former Chief of the Australian Defence Force observes: "Many, many years ago of course, people said women couldn't possibly do this job because they've got to lug 50 kilos of machinery around [...] but when you actually ask the question, 'well how often do we have to lug 50 kilos of machine around?' Well not that often. And then the next question, 'Well aren't we supposed to be really good at using locks [sic] and tackles and methods for doing all of this?' and after all a lot of the men that we have in our outfit couldn't do those tasks either."⁵²

In light of the historical reluctance of Australian governments to countenance female participation in frontline military service, it was significant that the Defence Science and Technology Organisation (DSTO) was subsequently engaged to determine the actual physical requirements of employment streams that had been previously off limits to women.⁵³

The essentialization of the feminine in order to argue against female participation in combat roles is paralleled by the discourse surrounding the inclusion of other minority

⁵¹ Jeremy Thompson, "Women Cleared to Serve in Combat", *ABC News*, <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2011-09-27/women-on-the-frontline/2946258>, (accessed 6 January 2014). Many of the comments at the foot of this article reflect this view.

⁵² Statement of Admiral Chris Barry (Rtd), on Samantha Hawley's Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) Radio report "Defence Scientists putting women to the test" *PM*, 9 September 2011, <http://www.abc.net.au/pm/content/2009/s2681304.htm>, (accessed 6 January 2014).

⁵³ Australian Government: Defence Science and Technology Organisation, "Physical Employment Standards," <http://www.dsto.defence.gov.au/projects/physical-employment-standards>, (accessed on 6 January 2014).

groups within the military. This is particularly evident in the management of adherents to minority religions, specifically Islam. The ideal, or heroic, military identity is essentialized as the defender of Christian values. According to Bernard Gaynor, “The Australian Defence Force should be an honorable institution and, indeed, it has been. It has a proud place in Australian history defending our nation and its Christian values, culture and heritage.”⁵⁴ Conversely, the motives of Muslim participation in the military are suspected: “[G]enerally speaking, if a military installation in a Western nation is the target of a terrorist threat, a bunch of Muslims will be planning it. With all that in mind, generally speaking, if you increase the number of Muslims in Western countries you will probably see more of these atrocities in the future. And if you are dumb enough to put these people into uniform, then there is also a fair chance the military will change as well. Not for the better, either.”⁵⁵

These attitudes were reflected by the US military personnel in Iraq who painted the slogan “Jesus Killed Mohammed” in Arabic on their armored personnel vehicle, and by the US Congressman who declared that peace in Iraq was reliant on “spreading the message of Jesus Christ, the message of peace on earth, good will towards men.”⁵⁶

With both gender and religion, there is evidence of stereotypical characteristics applied to an other in order to argue against inclusion of that group in the defense of the nation. This thesis aims to deconstruct the apparent “common sense” of this viewpoint through the mobilization of social constructivism and symbolic interactionism in an effort to ascertain how much of the ideal military identity is socially constructed. Moreover, this analysis will consider whether these socially constructed elements are worthy of retention in a twenty-first century military organization.

Military Legitimacy

Before launching too deeply into *how* military identities are developed and reinforced, it would be useful to consider the broader question of the utility of different types of military identities. Put differently, can certain military identities legitimize a military

⁵⁴ Bernard Gaynor, “Defence Terminates my Commission,” <http://bernardgaynor.com.au/defence-terminates-my-commission/>, (accessed 6 January 2014).

⁵⁵ Bernard Gaynor, “Enlisting the Enemy,” *The Pickering Post*, <http://pickeringpost.com/story/enlisting-the-enemy/1793>, (accessed 2 December 2014).

⁵⁶ Chris Rodda, “Against all Enemies, Foreign and Domestic”, in James E. Parco and David A. Levy, eds., *Attitudes Aren't Free : Thinking Deeply About Diversity in the Us Armed Forces* (Maxwell Air Force Base, AL: Air University Press, 2010), 72.; Rodda, “Against all Enemies”, 69.

organization in particular ways? Helena Carreiras highlights a basic tension relating to military practitioners—they are expected to maintain the capability of legitimized violence on behalf of the state while also remaining “responsive to wider social values and thus to the society in which they are embedded and which pays for them.”⁵⁷ This resonates with Janowitz’s conception of a military organization that is responsive to the social dynamics of the society it serves. However, Carreiras also suggests that this tension requires a military to be “Janus-faced,” a term that carries the implication that there is a necessary separation between the two requirements, in which a move toward the embracing of societal values will reduce military capability and vice-versa.⁵⁸ As noted above, this argument is mobilized heavily by those critical of greater minority participation in the military, particularly that of women. Interestingly, a modified capability argument is sometimes used to argue *for* greater representation of women and other minority groups in the military by concentrating primarily on the instrumental benefits of diverse and inclusive workforces. The 2012 Phase 2 report of the *Review into the Treatment of Women in the Australian Defence Force* exemplifies this argument:

[t]he Review identifies five critical reasons that a change in the treatment of women must be a priority for a strong and sustainable ADF:

1. **Attract the Best Talent**
2. **Reduce Cost**
3. **Increase Capability**
4. **Be a First Class and High Performing Employer**
5. **Take a Leadership Position**⁵⁹

In a speech to all commanding officers in the RAAF, Australia’s Sex Discrimination Commissioner Elizabeth Broderick provided further insight into the construction of these five critical arguments for increased representation of women: “Building an inclusive organization is about delivering capability outcomes [...] Gender diverse organisations perform better [...] We don’t need to go to the human rights arguments—this is

⁵⁷ Helena Carreiras, *Gender and the Military : Women in the Armed Forces of Western Europe*, Cass Military Studies (New York NY: Routledge, 2006), 72.; Parco and Levy, "Preface."

⁵⁸ Carreiras, *Gender and the Military*, 72.

⁵⁹ Australian Human Rights Commission, *Review into the Treatment of Women in the Australian Defence Force*, (Sydney: Australian Human Rights Commission, 2012), 43.

about capability.”⁶⁰ While there is an extensive body of literature to support the Review’s conclusion that greater diversity and workplace inclusion can yield powerful instrumental benefits, the absence of any arguments from a normative human rights standpoint is unusual for a Government organization that has codified its anti-discrimination policy in domestic legislation and as a signatory to international treaties and agreements.⁶¹

The discourse surrounding how a military should be designed hints at the suggestion that sources of legitimacy for the military are numerous and somewhat contested. The emphasis on instrumental capability evident in the report outlined above indicates that a strong legitimizing factor for an air force is its military capability. This is unremarkable; however, the de-linking of the normative, taking a course of action because it is the “right thing to do,” and the instrumental prompts the question of whether it is possible—or even desirable—for an organization to achieve both aims. The answer may lie in the framework used to measure the legitimacy of the organization. Here the contested nature of legitimacy makes it prudent to define clearly the term as it applies in this analysis. Jacques Van Doorn describes legitimacy as “the capacity of a social or political system to develop and maintain a general belief that the existing political order and its main solutions are generally appropriate.”⁶² This provides a departure point for a working definition of military legitimacy; however it still falls short as it fails to outline clearly what criteria lead to the general belief that the constitution of the organisation is generally appropriate. Here it is necessary to identify some of the foundational ideas that contribute to the self-image of the particular state, many of which are enshrined in the law of the state that maintains the military, while others can be found in the writings of political philosophers such as Max Weber.

⁶⁰ Unpublished statement by Elizabeth Broderick at *Chief of Air Force New Horizon Call*, RAAF Glenbrook, August 2013.

⁶¹ Scott E. Page, *The Difference : How the Power of Diversity Creates Better Groups, Firms, Schools, and Societies* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007).; James Surowiecki, *The Wisdom of Crowds : Why the Many Are Smarter Than the Few and How Collective Wisdom Shapes Business, Economies, Societies, and Nations* (New York, NY: Doubleday, 2004).; Two examples of conventions that seek to limit discrimination in the workplace are *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights*, and *International Labour Organization Convention 111: Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention*. The Australian Government has ratified both of these documents.

⁶² Jacques van Doorn, “The Military and the Crisis of Legitimacy”, in *The Military and the Problem of Legitimacy*, ed. Gwyn Harries-Jenkins and J. A. A. van Doorn (Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications, 1976), 20.

Weber addresses the concept of political legitimacy in a number of his works; and while he concerns himself with political legitimacy, he describes his ideas on legitimacy to be relevant to all “social action which involves social relationships.”⁶³ Moreover, these ideas are directly relevant to the military by virtue of its position as a political tool of a government. Put simply, political legitimacy influences military legitimacy because the purpose of the military is to achieve political outcomes for the government of the day.⁶⁴ In *Basic Concepts in Sociology*, Weber posits a number of types of legitimacy, of which “legal” is the most relevant to this project. As contrasted with authority legitimized by convention, Weber points to the fact that transgression in the framework of a legally legitimized order “will be met by physical or psychic sanctions aimed at compelling conformity or at punishing disobedience.”⁶⁵ While military forces can also claim legitimacy by convention, due to the enduring nature of their existence, as Harries-Jenkins and van Doorn observe, “though armed forces may stress the functional significance of tradition, the more usual basis of any claim to legitimacy in an industrialized society is the legality of the institution.”⁶⁶ While it is clear that tradition continues to have a powerful effect on the perceived legitimacy of the military, as typified by the debate surrounding female participation in combat roles, arguments against cultural change on the basis of tradition are becoming increasingly untenable, particularly in light of recent sexual scandals that have uncovered a “dark side” to military cultures.⁶⁷ Viewing legitimacy through a legal lens serves to underscore that a military must be more than instrumentally effective to enjoy legitimacy in the eyes of those outside the organization.

This project will explore the concept of military legitimacy through the lens of Max Weber’s “legal” legitimacy by critically examining whether the US Air Force Acad-

⁶³Max Weber, *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization*, trans., A. Henderson & T. Parsons (New York, NY: The Free Press of Glencoe, 1947), 124.

⁶⁴ Although this concept is ubiquitous among many military theorists, Carl von Clausewitz is perhaps the most quoted: “war is not merely an act of policy but a true political instrument, a continuation of political intercourse, carried on with other means.” Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, trans., Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1984), 87.

⁶⁵ Max Weber, *Basic Concepts in Sociology* (New York,: Philosophical Library, 1962), 75.

⁶⁶ Gwyn Harries-Jenkins and Jacques van Doorn, “Editorial Introduction”, in Harries-Jenkins and van Doorn, *The Military and the Problem of Legitimacy*, 6.

⁶⁷Editorial, “The Military’s Sexual Assault Crisis”, *New York Times*, 7 May 2013, http://www.nytimes.com/2013/05/08/opinion/the-pentagons-sexual-assault-crisis.html?_r=0 (accessed 18 March 2015).

emy is structured to afford current and future members with an environment that enshrines the normative values framework that is espoused by the law and the Government.

Key Questions

Having now examined some of the key literature occupying the margins of military sociology, it is worth outlining a number of the key diversity discourses and the major questions that are being pursued. In particular, the issues of racial and gender equality, and the integration of homosexuals have caused varying levels of anguish to political and military policy makers in the United States. More specifically, the juxtaposition of these three examples of integration suggests a number of common themes that will provide a useful backdrop upon which to build the subsequent analysis of this paper.

Racial Integration

While African-American soldiers fought and died in service with the US military in both the First and Second World Wars, their contribution took place within the construct of segregated units. Indeed, as Aabram Marsh observes, the US Army Air Service and US Army Air Corps—essentially the US Air Force prior to its secession from the US Army—decided to refuse African-American enlistment, and “by 1940, the entire US military’s black officer strength stood at five on active duty.”⁶⁸ This constituted a drop from 1408 African-American officers during World War I, underlining the fact that while tolerated in times of national crisis, black participation in the military was viewed as neither necessary nor desirable in the peacetime military. In the Second World War, the majority of African-American service occurred within segregated units, apart from a small number who saw “integrated service at the end of the war.”⁶⁹ Arguments against integration were generally based on an assumed military inferiority of the African-American and predicted that integration would “lead to disruptive and undermining conditions.”⁷⁰ While African-Americans remain statistically under-represented in the US Air Force officer corps,⁷¹ the

⁶⁸ Aabram G. Marsh, “The Tanning of the Military”, in James E. Parco, David A. Levy, and Air University (U.S.). Press., *Attitudes Aren't Free : Thinking Deeply About Diversity in the Us Armed Forces* (Maxwell Air Force Base, AL: Air University Press, 2010), 395.

⁶⁹ Edward Bernard Glick, *Soldiers, Scholars, and Society; the Social Impact of the American Military* (Pacific Palisades, Calif.: Goodyear Pub. Co., 1971), 16.

⁷⁰ Majority Report of a Committee appointed by the U.S. Navy in December 1941, reproduced in Elizabeth Kier, “Homosexuals in the U.S. Military : Open Integration and Combat Effectiveness,” *International Affairs*, 23, no. 2 (1998), 24.

⁷¹ Nelson Lim et al., *Improving Demographic Diversity in the U.S. Air Force Officer Corps*, (RAND Corporation: 2014),

steady social acceptance of racial integration and the debunking of racial inferiority arguments has silenced criticism that black participation in the military would lower social cohesion and hamper instrumental effectiveness.

While the removal of legal barriers to racially integrated service constituted a major step in removing impediments to African-American military service, the overall representation of these minority groups within the US military remains low.⁷² Thus sociologists are now investigating the reasons behind the enduring nature of this low level of participation.

Gender Equality

The acceptance of women in the military has been addressed above, but the recent removal of barriers to female participation in front-line specialties by the US government has been a breakthrough in a discourse that has frequently stalled as societies debated the role of women. The introduction of women into the military, and more recently into combat positions, has been a slow process, however. A key reason for this lies in the fact that there is much broader acceptance of paternalistic attitudes toward women, and “common sense” arguments, usually based on the relative strength differential of women, than there is for attitudes that maintain that particular races are not suited to military service.⁷³ The broader social acceptance of gender discrimination, dressed in terms of protecting “our” women and “civilization,” as distinct from racism, complicates the task of removing barriers to gender integration.⁷⁴ Recent sociological research has focused on debunking many of these “common sense” arguments by challenging their foundational assumptions. In a 2011 article in *The Australian*, Greg Sheridan presents a number of familiar arguments against women participating in combat operations. One of the more subjective, but nonetheless pervasive, arguments addresses the potential impact to group cohesion: “Of course, there would also be intense disruption to the small group cohesion that a fighting military unit works endlessly to attain and then hold on to, and which is the dif-

http://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/research_reports/RR400/RR495/RAND_RR495.pdf (accessed 14 April 2015).

⁷² Marsh, “The Tanning of the Military”, 396.

⁷³ Carreiras, *Gender and the Military*, 176.

⁷⁴ Greg Sheridan, “Women Have No Place in Combat”, *The Australian*, 29 November 2011, <http://www.theaustralian.com.au/national-affairs/opinion/women-have-no-place-in-combat/story-e6frgd0x-1226149860334>, (accessed 8 December 2014).

ference between life and death in actual combat.”⁷⁵ This argument achieves its “common sense” credibility in the absence of evidence to the contrary because females in Australia are yet to serve in the types of combat units he speaks of. There is, however, research to indicate that not only is unit cohesion “only one of many factors that may contribute to military effectiveness,” unhealthy levels of group cohesion can actually hamper military capability.⁷⁶ As Carreiras observes, “although similar individuals tend to seek one another’s company, and cohesive groups may often be more enjoyable, they are not always more productive.”⁷⁷

Homosexuals in the Military

A third discourse that is generating significant academic sociological interest is the creation of a military organization that is inclusive of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex (LGBTI) members. While the discourse generally refers to homosexuals in the military, the broad area of interest relates to the integration of personnel who fall outside the military’s normalized hegemonic heterosexual framework. While there is overlap with the challenges of racial and gender integration, moves to encourage LGBTI recruitment and retention in the military are relatively recent phenomena. Additional barriers exist to the inclusion of LGBTI members. In addition to arguments emphasizing the impact on group cohesion, opponents such as Elizabeth Kier have mobilized various fears ranging from forced intimacy in single-sex ablution facilities to HIV—“Given the officially recognized correlation between homosexual conduct and HIV infection, it is reasonable to expect that repeal of the law [against Homosexuals serving in the US military] could increase the number of troops who require medical benefits for many years but cannot be deployed.”⁷⁸ As in the case of gender equality, sociological research in this area aims to debunk the assumptions upon which opponents to integration base their arguments. Despite the removal of legal barriers in the US, the creation of a safe and inclusive environment for LGBTI members in the military is unlikely to be achieved

⁷⁵ Sheriden, “Women Have No Place in Combat.”

⁷⁶ Elizabeth Kier, “Homosexuals in the U.S. Military,” 8.; Carreiras, *Gender and the Military*, 92; Donna Winslow, “Misplaced Loyalties: The Role of Military Culture in the Breakdown of Discipline in Peace Operations,” *Canadian Review of Sociology/Revue canadienne de sociologie* 35, no. 3 (1998): 364.

⁷⁷ Carreiras, *Gender and the Military*, 93.

⁷⁸ Elaine Donnelly, “Defending the Culture of the Military,” in James E. Parco, David A. Levy, and Air University (U.S.). Press., *Attitudes Aren't Free : Thinking Deeply About Diversity in the Us Armed Forces* (Maxwell Air Force Base, AL: Air University Press, 2010), 395.

quickly, due to firmly entrenched social and religious opposition to non-heterosexual individuals.

This review has highlighted some of the key international literature informing the discourse, such as: the relationship between the military and the state, the military as an institution or an occupation, the social psychology of group interaction, the dynamics of minority integration, and the concept of military legitimacy. The aim of this project is to harness some of these themes to address the concept of identity construction in the United States Air Force. Broadly speaking, the ensuing chapters will seek to bridge the gap between the armed forces and society by analyzing whether the approaches to identity construction at the United States Air Force Academy contribute to the creation of exclusive ingroups. Throughout the analysis, the military's dual nature will be critically examined; that of a self-regulating society with a legal and moral responsibility to uphold the values of the civilian society its membership is drawn from. Thus, identities that emerge from the qualitative data will be assessed for their value on two fronts; how they contribute to the instrumental efficacy of the USAF, but also how they influence the legitimacy of the organization by reinforcing, or contradicting, the normative values of broader American society.

Chapter 3

Theoretical Exposition

This section will explore the theoretical frameworks that will be mobilized in the next chapter in analyzing the method of identity creation at the United States Air Force Academy. These theories will be drawn from the sociological and social psychology disciplines and have been chosen as they provide useful lenses through which to critique the ways in which the Academy constructs military identities. These theories are also useful in helping explain why cultural change can be difficult to implement in some organizations, such as the military. That said, it would be unfair to represent the Western military as resistant to reform on all fronts. Indeed, the rapidity of change in many areas, particularly evident in the technological realm, has resulted in the armed forces of Western liberal democracies—particularly air forces—being at the vanguard of organizations seeking to optimize their operations in light of changing circumstances. But while technological change is embraced through an understanding of its instrumental importance, at the heart of this project lies an argument suggesting that efforts to enact meaningful cultural change in the military fall short of achieving lasting results due to a fundamental misdirection of focus. This chapter will introduce some of the key theories that will be later mobilized in an analysis of how the US Air Force Academy develops military identities and processes difference inside the organization.

A theoretical exploration of identity theory is important to this project, as it will help build frameworks that promote a clearer understanding of the ways in which the military constructs and shapes identity. This chapter begins by clearly describing what the concept of identity means in the context of this project. Primarily, I argue that identity is constitutively dependent on the existence of a non-self or “other,” and this section will outline some concepts fundamental to the understanding of identity in the social sciences, and then differentiate the key types of identities that will be discussed throughout the project.

After positing a broad understanding of identity as an interdependent construct, I then explore the extant theory concerning the inputs and outputs of this constructed iden-

tity. Through mobilizing Erving Goffman's "presentation of the self" in the context of a "social environment," a further exploration of identity formation will be framed in a dramaturgical sense, arguing that rather than being fixed and functional, identities can be social constructions that arise through various "gestures, practices, declarations, actions and movements."¹ Following the examination of identities as presented, this chapter will engage with Judith Butler's theory of "performativity," utilizing the concept to make a distinction between presentations—primarily mobilized by members conforming to a hegemonic norm—and performances, carried out by minority members of the organization, such as women.² The section will explore this dual nature of identity construction in order to chart a path toward a more specific treatment of military identities, which will occur in a later chapter. Appended to this introduction to the performative characteristic of identity formation, social constructivism will be presented as a useful prism through which to investigate the methods by which military organizations create and manage identities.

Next, the theory of symbolic interactionism will be utilized to examine the methods in which elements of these constructed military identities are used to create meaning in the organization, regulate the level of interaction, inform the creation of behavioral norms, and reinforce the dominant narrative. The second half of this chapter will be primarily concerned with theory surrounding the concept of legitimacy and how a military organization can attain legitimacy in the eyes of the key stakeholders in Western liberal societies—the government and the people. The concept of "representation" will also be introduced as a potential legitimating factor for an organization, building a theoretical basis upon which later analysis of qualitative and quantitative data can be built. The final task of the chapter will be to tie some of these theoretical threads together by a short introduction to Erving Goffman's concept of the total institution.

This chapter seeks to introduce a new path through the lens of theories that have not traditionally been used in analyzing the sociology of the military. In doing so, I will lay out a methodological pathway that will guide the subsequent analysis of identity formation at the United States Air Force Academy.

¹ Erving Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1959), 238.; Moya Lloyd, *Judith Butler : From Norms to Politics* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2007), 48.

² Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble : Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 2006).

What is an Identity?

The contemporary understanding of the term identity was popularised by Erik Erikson, a Viennese immigrant to the United States. His psychoanalytic exploration of the child-parent relationship against the backdrop of the social upheaval of World War II and its aftermath established much of the foundation for the subsequent emergence of identity in the Sociological and Social Psychological literature.³ At the foundational level, identity seems a simple concept—the answer to the question of “who am I”? Erikson provides an early definition where identity “connotes both a persistent sameness within oneself (self-sameness) and a persistent sharing of some kind of essential character with others.”⁴

But as Anthony Elliott points out, even at this very basic of stages problems arise: “Is it really possible for identity to refer only to the individual Self - that is, an inward reality? Can a person really be self-identical to herself? Are not society, culture, history and politics written all across the ‘texts’ of human identity?”⁵ Elliott hints at a further complication in attempting to package an understanding of identity; do humans possess a singular identity or multiple identities? And if the latter is true, are they arranged in a hierarchical manner, giving priority to certain identities as more meaningful than others? How do I know that any self-identification I ascribe is authentic? The last of these questions is perhaps the most simple to answer, and provides a useful departure point for a discussion of identity.

In *Identity/Difference*, William Connolly clearly articulates the argument of those who advocate an oppositional definition of identity:

An identity is established in relation to a series of differences that have become socially recognized. These differences are essential to its being. If they did not coexist as differences, it would not exist in its distinctness and solidity. Entrenched in this indispensable relationship is a second set of

³ Andrew J. Weigert, J. Smith Teitge, and Dennis W. Teitge, *Society and Identity : Toward a Sociological Psychology* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 6. For Erikson’s early writings on the subject of identity, see Erik Erikson, “Ego Development and Historical Change,” *Psychoanalytic Study of the Child* 2, (1946); Erik Erikson, “The Problem of Ego Identity,” *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association* 4, (1956).

⁴ Erikson, “The Problem of Ego Identity,” 56.

⁵ Anthony Elliott, “Editor’s Introduction,” in *Routledge Handbook of Identity Studies*, ed. Anthony Elliot (Abingdon, Oxen: Routledge, 2014), xv.

tendencies, themselves in need of exploration, to congeal established identities into fixed forms, thought and lived as if their structure expressed the true order of things. When these pressures prevail, the maintenance of one's identity (or field of identities) involves the conversion of some differences into otherness, into evil, or one of its numerous surrogates. Identity requires difference in order to be, and it converts difference into otherness in order to secure its own self-certainty.⁶

Thus articulating who I am *not* may productively begin the task of describing who I am. Banal in its simplicity, the oppositional characteristic of identity is central to understanding how “agonistic difference,” in which each respects difference and understands the constitutive nature of the other to its own identity, can develop into combative “antagonistic identity,” where each identity seeks “conquest or conversion.”⁷

To build on this agonistic model of identity, we can turn to George Herbert Mead, who makes the distinction between the “self” and the “generalized other.”⁸ The generalized other is the “organized community or social group which gives to the individual his unity of self.”⁹ In other words, the generalized other is the non-self. But of particular interest in Mead's conceptual paradigm is the further differentiation he makes in relation to the self, which he describes as comprising an “I” and a “me”.¹⁰ For Mead, the “me” is “the organized set of attitudes of others which one himself assumes,” whereas the “I” “is the response of the organism to the attitudes of others.”¹¹ Put more simply, Mead's me arises through my being an object for others to observe, process and interact with. On the other hand, the I constitutes the subjective element of identity and can provide a source of difference or resistance to the objective me. Of crucial importance here is the centrality of the generalized other to the formation of the self. As with Connolly, there can be no self—or identity, since Mead's self is a modern reflexive construct—in the absence of a social situation during which we ascertain a generalized other. Mead uses the development of a child to illustrate this concept. In early stages, the child plays at various roles it has perceived; “vague personalities that are about them and which affect them and on

⁶ William E. Connolly, *Identity/Difference : Democratic Negotiations of Political Paradox*, Expanded ed. (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2002), 64.

⁷ Connolly, *Identity/Difference*, 64.

⁸ George Herbert Mead, *Mind, Self, and Society : From the Standpoint of a Social Behaviourist* (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 1934), 154.

⁹ Mead, *Mind, Self and Society*, 154.

¹⁰ Mead, *Mind, Self and Society*, 173.

¹¹ Mead, *Mind, Self and Society*, 175.

which they depend.”¹² For a child at this level of development, the attitudes of *individuals* hold meaning and help direct behavior, but there is an absence of any awareness of *collective* attitudes. With maturity comes a greater relevance of the attitudes of the generalized other. For Mead, this is typified by another construct: the game. In a game, the attitudes of the generalized other matter in the sense that they inform the purpose of the activity. For children to participate meaningfully, they must understand what they, or their team, are attempting to achieve, in addition to what the opposition would like to do. As Mead observes: “There are all sorts of social organizations, some of which are fairly lasting, some temporary, into which the child is entering, and he is playing a sort of social game in them. It is a period in which he likes ‘to belong,’ and he gets into organizations which come into existence and pass out of existence. He becomes a something which can function in the organized whole, and thus tends to determine himself in his relationship with the group to which he belongs. That process is one which is a striking stage in the development of the child’s morale. It constitutes him a self-conscious member of the community to which he belongs.”¹³

Not all theorists place such primacy on the oppositional character of identity. In *Sources of the Self*, Charles Taylor sketches three axes of what he describes as “moral thinking.”¹⁴ In introducing the concept, Taylor differentiates his treatment of the term “moral” from contemporary popular uses. Taylor acknowledges that the term “morality” “can be and often is defined purely in terms of respect for others” but broadens its scope for the purposes of his argument to more closely relate it to the self.¹⁵ For Taylor, morality also has an important influence in the ways we judge what constitutes a well-lived life. As Taylor puts it, “to understand our moral world we have to see not only what ideas and pictures underlie our sense of respect for others but also those which underpin our notions of a full life.”¹⁶

Taylor’s conceptualisation of “moral thinking” is distinctly modern, as is evident in two of the axes; the awareness of an obligation to respect others, and the recognition of

¹² Mead, *Mind, Self and Society*, 153.

¹³ Mead, *Mind, Self and Society*, 160

¹⁴ Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1989), 15.

¹⁵ Taylor, *Sources of the Self*, 14.

¹⁶ Taylor, *Sources of the Self*, 14.

a basic human dignity.¹⁷ The third axis is concerned with the concept of the good life. It is through consideration of what constitutes a life well lived that prompts one to seek a sense of moral orientation: “To know who you are is to be oriented in moral space, a space in which questions arise about what is good or bad, what is worth doing and what not, what has meaning and importance for you and what is trivial and secondary.”¹⁸

For Taylor, identity (or more crudely put as the answer to the question of “Who am I?”) is a vital locator in the search for what it means to live a good life.¹⁹ He sees the question of identity as indelibly linked to the establishment of meaning in one’s life, in the same sense that a map provides meaning for one seeking to navigate toward a destination in unfamiliar surroundings.²⁰

But Taylor still acknowledges an oppositional character to the self and identity, by observing that it is through shared language that our selves become differentiated; “we achieve selfhood among other selves.”²¹ In a similar way that Mead’s self interacts with the generalized other, Taylor presents the formation of identity, born out of a differentiated object—the self, as a “quest” that plays out through the generation of narratives we build through regular reference to “our place in relation to the good.”²²

Importantly, both theorists agree that the self is less a unified entity but rather the result of a dialogical process of identification with the external world filtered through a reflexive lens.

Differentiating the Self from Identity

A pause is worthwhile at this point in order to avoid confusion related to the conflation of the terms self and identity. Although both terms are used in a variety of contexts, the Symbolic Interactionist Sheldon Stryker provides a useful way of conceptualizing the difference. For him, identities “are ‘parts’ of self, internalized positional designations. They exist insofar as the person is a participant in structured role relationships.”²³ This framing of a collection of identities constituting a broader self will be used through-

¹⁷ Taylor, *Sources of the Self*, 15.

¹⁸ Taylor, *Sources of the Self*, 28.

¹⁹ Taylor, *Sources of the Self*, 27.

²⁰ Taylor, *Sources of the Self*, 42.

²¹ Taylor, *Sources of the Self*, 51.

²² Taylor, *Sources of the Self*, 52.

²³ Sheldon Stryker, *Symbolic Interactionism : A Social Structural Version*, (Caldwell, NJ : Blackburn Press, 2002), 60.

out the analysis in this thesis. The concept of multiple identities will be further explored below.

The Effect of Recognition

Having established the centrality of an other to the construction of an identity, it follows that the manner in which this other is recognized can have an impact on the subsequent relationship. As outlined above, Connolly makes the distinction between agonistic difference and antagonistic identity. In his short essay "The Politics of Recognition," Charles Taylor explores some of the ways in which recognition can influence which of these two interactions occurs. Starting from an acknowledgement of the oppositional nature of identity formation ("My own identity crucially depends on my dialogical relations with others"), Taylor argues that since an identity is informed by the recognition, or misrecognition, it receives, "a person or group of people can suffer real damage, real distortion, if the people or society around them mirror back to them a confining or demeaning or contemptible picture of themselves."²⁴ This drives home the centrality of the oppositional other not only by suggesting that it is crucial to the formation of an identity, but also by arguing that the *quality* of the dialogical relationship between the two affects both the content and nature of the subsequently formed identity. Importantly, Taylor also suggests that the relevance of identities surmounts the trivialities of interpersonal interaction and permeates the very fabric of social meaning. To him, the meaning derived from the recognition of, and reaction to, identity is indelibly linked with the functioning of all social environments.

A Working Model of Identity

We are now in a position to begin a synthesis of these theoretical concepts in order to build a model of identity that can be used for the remainder of this analysis. Of fundamental importance to the modern sense of identity is its inward mobilizing of the individual with reference to an external other. Sociologists and social psychologists generally agree that this differentiation takes place in the context of the social environment in a dialogical manner. As Mead has suggested, this dialogue occurs both internally, through the interaction between me and I, and at the level of the social engagement,

²⁴ Charles Taylor, "The Politics of Recognition," in *Multiculturalism : Examining the Politics of Recognition*, ed. Amy Gutman (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994), 34.; Taylor, "The Politics of Recognition", 25.

where the interplay between other selves is carried out. The (mis)recognition that occurs in this interplay is then fed back into the system and reprocessed. We can therefore build a working definition of identity as a reflexive and oppositional response based on the modern self's assessment of meaning and value in a social interaction.

Types of Identity

Having narrowed the focus of the concept of identity, it remains to examine the types of identity that are relevant to this project. Despite the cross-disciplinary overlap evident in this analysis, there are important differences in the treatment of identity across disciplines that should be observed. Here it is possible to make a key distinction between the understanding of identity in the social psychology literature and its conceptualization within the sociological academy. James Côté and Charles Levine make reference to the “structure-agency debate,” through which sociologists and social psychologists contest whether analyses should focus on external, such as “social, political or economic forces,” or internal, “individual, willful potentials,” factors that contribute to the formation of identity.²⁵ The existence of this tension is understandable, but Côté and Levine also argue that the debate is in many ways unnecessary, as it is possible to blend the two approaches, and in doing so “demonstrate that identity is a function of both external (social) and internal (agentic) factors, and that both the sociological and psychological perspectives are essential for a comprehensive understanding of the complexities of human self-definition.”²⁶

Stryker's conception of the relationship between the self and identities was outlined above and serves as an appropriate starting point for a brief discussion on the different types of identities suggested by theorists that are relevant to this project. A longer exposition of the key tenets of Symbolic Interactionism will appear later in this chapter; however, at this point it will suffice to observe that the theory assumes the existence of shared knowledges, or symbols, that inform the creation of role identities that are assigned to participants in a given social situation.²⁷ These role identities provide the framework for the participants to make sense of the interaction, but may only constitute

²⁵ James E. Côté, Levine, Charles G., *Identity Formation, Agency, and Culture : A Social Psychological Synthesis* (Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2002), 9.

²⁶ Côté & Levine, *Identity Formation*, 9.

²⁷ Stryker, *Symbolic Interactionism*, 60.

one of a variety of possible identities that an individual may assume. As Stryker observes: “one may have a long list of identities, limited only by the number of structured role relationships one is involved in. Thus, a woman may have identities as physician, wife, mother, child, tennis player, Democrat etc., which taken together comprise the self.”²⁸ The concept of many possible identities being attributed to a single self is important and will be useful in later unpacking the particular types of identities that appear in military organizations.

However the existence of multiple identities raises the question of conflict—which identity is appropriate in any given social context? Here the concept of “identity salience” is relevant.²⁹ This term describes the idea that all potential identities are hierarchically ordered—the higher the location of the identity on the list, “the more likely that the identity will be invoked in a given situation or in many situations.”³⁰ But of even greater relevance to this analysis is the follow-on concept of “identity commitment,” where identities are invoked in a systematic manner consistent with the relative importance of the social environment to the individual.³¹ If membership in the rugby team is important to males at a boarding school, they are likely to mobilize the identity that is most coherent in the context of that environment. Clearly, the concept of meaning and value expressed in the definition of identity above strongly influences both the salience and commitment aspects of identity.

In *The Power of Identity*, Manuel Castells echoes much of Stryker’s argument, although he crucially draws a sharp distinction between the terms “role” and “identity.”³² For Castells, “roles are defined by norms structured by the institutions and organizations of society”.³³ Conversely, identity “is people’s source of meaning and experience [...] constructed through a process of individuation,” which resonates with Mead’s conceptualization of the formation of the self.³⁴ Thus in Castell’s view, the performance of a role in a given social setting may not necessarily reflect the true meaning of the interaction, in line with the participant’s identity, but rather reflect a desire to accord with the accept-

²⁸ Stryker, *Symbolic Interactionism*, 60.

²⁹ Stryker, *Symbolic Interactionism*, 60.

³⁰ Stryker, *Symbolic Interactionism*, 61.

³¹ Stryker, *Symbolic Interactionism*, 62.

³² Manuel Castells, *The Power of Identity* (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 6-7.

³³ Castells, *The Power of Identity*, 6.

³⁴ Castells, *The Power of Identity*, 6.

ed societal norms. Jason Bantjes and Johan Nieuwoudt provide an example of student behaviour in a South African boys' school that helps illustrate this concept. Because of a general antipathy toward homosexuality in this school, a common bullying practice was to simulate homosexual intercourse (labelled "humping") in a public manner designed to humiliate the victim.³⁵ Here, the social norms informing the "humping" invert the meaning of the interaction to the extent that it is the *victim* who is made to feel humiliated rather than the perpetrator. Thus the social understanding of the role of the perpetrator as punishing the victim supersedes any suggestion that the "humper" may in fact be homosexual. This distinction between role and identity will become relevant in the discussion of performance and performativity below.

Most of the discussion thus far has considered identity as a personal attribute; however, identity can also be seen to manifest itself in a collective sense. As David Snow observes, consideration of a group as possessing an identity requires nothing more than situating or placing that group as a "social object."³⁶ The group is then capable of social interaction in a way similar to an individual; a generalized other is identified and informs the internal me and I of the collective. Thus "personal" and "group" can be taken as two broad types of identity.

Castells presents three major types of identity that he sees as working within the framework of a collective identity. First, he describes a "legitimizing identity: introduced by the dominant institutions of society to extend and rationalize their domination."³⁷ A second type is a "resistance identity," which is assumed by those members who either cannot join the dominant identity, or are otherwise "devalued and/or stigmatized"³⁸ by the legitimizing identity. The final type is a "project identity" that is a new identity created by social actors that "seeks the transformation of the overall social structure."³⁹ These three types of identity are particularly useful in an analysis of US Air Force Academy, because it seeks to create an inclusive working environment for members drawn from an increasingly diverse population. Drawing on these conceptualizations of identity types, a major

³⁵ Jason Bantjes and Johan Nieuwoudt, "Masculinity and Mayhem: The Performance of Gender in a South African Boys' School," *Men and Masculinities*, 17, no. 4 (October 2014), 12.

³⁶ David Snow, "Collective Identity and Expressive Forms", *UC Irvine, Center for the Study of Democracy*, <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/2zn1t7bj>, (accessed 4 Feb 2015).

³⁷ Castells, *The Power of Identity*, 8.

³⁸ Castells, *The Power of Identity*, 8.

³⁹ Castells, *The Power of Identity*, 8.

hypothesis of this project is that scandals indicative of problematic behavioral norms indicate a need to reexamine the legitimizing identity in an organization with a view to building productive project identities.

Chapter Four will examine how the military creates personal and group legitimizing identities, and how these are equipped to engage with emerging resistance identities.

Erving Goffman and Presentation

In *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, sociologist Erving Goffman seeks to understand how social acts might mold and influence the social environment in which they are staged. For the purposes of this thesis, the term “social environment” “encompasses the immediate physical surroundings, social relationships, and cultural milieus within which defined groups of people function and interact.”⁴⁰ To Goffman, social acts are conduits whereby the individual “*expresses himself*” resulting in others being “*impressed* in some way by him.”⁴¹ Drawing on a metaphor of the theatre, he defines the stage as the “social establishment [...] any place surrounded by fixed barriers to perception in which a particular kind of activity regularly takes place.”⁴² According to Goffman, these “fixed barriers to perception” exist “during the period in which the individual is in the immediate presence of others” due to the fact that “few events may occur which directly provide the others with the conclusive information they will need if they are to direct wisely their own activity.”⁴³ In the subsequent development of this framework, he outlines four main perspectives through which any social establishment can be viewed; “technically,” describing its instrumental effectiveness, “politically,” concerning the allowable demands that can be placed on participants, “structurally,” which relates to the status relationships between the interlocutors, and “culturally,” pertaining to the behavioural norms and values that govern interactions.⁴⁴ These four perspectives, particularly the technical and cultural, are common *loci* for improvement activities in complex organizations such as the military. But Goffman presents an additional perspective of use to this project, that of the “dramaturgical.” Viewed through a dramaturgical lens, human in-

⁴⁰ Elizabeth Barnett and Michelle Casper, “Letters: A Definition of ‘Social Environment’” *American Journal of Public Health*, 91, no. 3 (March 2001), 465.

⁴¹ Goffman, *The Presentation of Self*, 2. Original emphasis.

⁴² Goffman, *The Presentation of Self*, 238.

⁴³ Goffman, *The Presentation of Self*, 238.

⁴⁴ Goffman, *The Presentation of Self*, 240.

teraction is fused with symbolic meaning through the dialogical act of *expressing* oneself, and the subsequent *impression* that is created by interpretation.⁴⁵ The expressive element of the exchange can be further separated into two parts, the expression that one “*gives*” and the impressions that are “*given off*.”⁴⁶ The basic distinction between the two is that the former is concerned more narrowly with the content of the exchange, while the latter “involves a wide range of action that others can treat as symptomatic of the actor, the expectation being that the action was performed for reasons other than the information conveyed in this way.”⁴⁷ It is the second sense of expression that Goffman is primarily concerned with, and it is also the more useful for the purposes of this project.

Thus, to mobilize Goffman’s theory, we can imagine that in any given social organization, there is a dramaturgical aspect to the social interaction. The drama is played out through a “presentation” (although Goffman makes frequent use of the term “performance,” this will be avoided for reasons that will become clear below) that “serves to influence in any way any of the other participants.”⁴⁸ This may manifest itself either cynically, where the actor knows that the purpose of the act is to “delude” the audience, or sincerely, when the actor believes in the content of the presentation.⁴⁹ Whether the actor seeks to delude or otherwise, the crucial element of Goffman’s theory surrounds the agency of the actor. As suggested above, the actor’s interest in conducting the presentation lies in the desire to influence the impression of others. There are myriad potential reasons for this, however, it is important to highlight the fact that these acts have the potential of molding and “producing an identity.”⁵⁰ Like the theatrical performer, the actor is party to the production of any identity formed through the presentation of symbolic acts in the context of the social establishment.

A classic military example generally occurs during basic training. At the US Air Force Academy for instance, newly inducted Cadets are immersed in a performance from the moment they board the bus that carries them away from the administration area—and their parents—to the operational areas of the Academy:

⁴⁵ Goffman, *The Presentation of Self*, 2.

⁴⁶ Goffman, *The Presentation of Self*, 2.

⁴⁷ Goffman, *The Presentation of Self*, 2.

⁴⁸ Goffman, *The Presentation of Self*, 15.

⁴⁹ Goffman, *The Presentation of Self*, 21.

⁵⁰ Lloyd, *Judith Butler*, 58.

The dulcet tones of the cadre [upperclass training Cadets] vanish the very instant the bus turns the corner, away from the Cadets' parents. 'Eyes forward!' a voice booms suddenly, a prelude to the world that awaits them over the next few weeks. The cloying dies and its exact opposite is born, hurling the newcomers into the freshman's life of orders and criticism, mind games, and exuberantly possessive pronouns. The change comes so unexpectedly and so completely that it seems choreographed. (It is.)

'Everyone on this bus sit up straight,' the voice hollers. It belongs to Cadet Technical Sergeant Steven A. Mount, a twenty-one-year-old from Texas City, Texas [...] For Mount, the encounter is pure theatre, but with a purpose. He is the first filter, aimed at separating the wavering or weak Cadets from the start. Better they should leave now than drag down morale three weeks into training. His tools are tension and intimidation.⁵¹

Here, the upperclass training Cadet's presentation is clearly and solely focussed on influencing the other participants in this specific social establishment.

Judith Butler: The "Radically Unconstructed" and Performativity

Although sometimes conflated with Goffman's concept of presentation, Judith Butler's theory of "performativity" provides an alternate perspective on the interplay between identity and performance.⁵² In *Gender Trouble*, Butler applies this concept of performativity to gender, making the case that the gendered body "has no ontological status apart from the various acts that constitute its reality."⁵³ Indeed, Butler enlarges this argument by also questioning the ontological status of sex, introducing the concept of sex as "radically unconstructed."⁵⁴ In developing this argument, Butler critiques the traditional notion of sex as essential, contending rather, that it is given—"far from being one of the determinants of gender, is actually one of its effects."⁵⁵ In short, Butler contends that rather than forming the basis of gender construction, the binary male/female framework is a *result* of the social production of gender. Therefore, for Butler, social understandings of the feminine inform the meaning inscribed on the female body, rather than the biological reality of the body itself creating the social understandings.

⁵¹ Diana Schemo, *Skies to Conquer: A Year inside the Air Force Academy* (Hoboken, N.J.: John Wiley & Sons, 2010).

⁵² Butler, *Gender Trouble*, 173.

⁵³ Butler, *Gender Trouble*, 173.

⁵⁴ Butler, *Gender Trouble*, 11.

⁵⁵ Lloyd, *Judith Butler*, 32.

Butler can therefore be read to present three views; sex as given, as distinct from essential, gender as acquired, through society's "recognition" of the female—manifested in dressing a baby in pink, for example—and identity as "performed." For the purposes of this analysis however, we will focus narrowly on Butler's treatment of the gendered body, placing this "radically unconstructed" view of sex to one side.⁵⁶

For Butler, Gender is produced, or constructed, through a "*stylized repetition of acts*," where "bodily gestures, movements, and styles of various kinds constitute the illusion of an abiding gendered self."⁵⁷ The continuity of these acts is crucial to the maintenance of the constructed gender, and it is the occasional *discontinuity* (Butler gives the example of a drag performance) that effectively provides the exception that proves Butler's "rule." According to Esther Newton, a "double inversion" occurs during a drag show, where the performer is at once saying "my 'outside' appearance is feminine, but my essence 'inside' is masculine" while "my appearance 'outside' is masculine but my essence 'inside' is feminine."⁵⁸ For Newton, the inability for both of these to be true simultaneously provides evidence of the performative nature of gender.

It might be useful to assess the similarities to Goffman's theory in an attempt to more clearly articulate the important distinctions. Broadly, Goffman and Butler agree on the power of acting in the context of a "social drama."⁵⁹ Moreover, there is consensus that these acts are carried out for a particular purpose, although for Butler this goal is more broad, "the strategic aim of maintaining gender within its binary frame".⁶⁰

Through Goffman's lens however, the actor is charged with an agency and has more freedom of action than in Butler's paradigm. But more fundamentally, the point at which identity construction occurs is the major delineation between the two theoretical models. As argued above, Goffman's actor is empowered with the ability to mold and influence the identity-formation process through performance. While this agency may not definitively decide the type and manner of the identity that is constructed, the crucial point is that the aim is for identity to be formed *after* the performance. Put another way, the performance is a constitutive element of the identity. This is not the case with Butler's

⁵⁶ Butler, *Gender Trouble*, 11.

⁵⁷ Butler, *Gender Trouble*, 179. Original emphasis.

⁵⁸ Quoted in Butler, *Gender Trouble*, 174.

⁵⁹ Butler, *Gender Trouble*, 178.

⁶⁰ Butler, *Gender Trouble*, 179.

theory. For Butler, symbolic and ritual acts are performed in a way that reinforces an *ex-tant* identity, which, for the purposes of her argument, she typifies as gender. But gender is not the only possible locus of performativity. As will be demonstrated below, the theory can be broadly applied in many situations where an ideal identity constrains the actions of those who do not belong to the hegemonic in-group. Critics of performativity object to the concept of a “mask without an actor,” and argue that the theory posits the performers as mindless dupes with neither agency nor capacity for resistance.⁶¹ These are valid claims, and it might be more constructive to label the agency available to members of the non-hegemonic out-group as *constrained*. As Butler observes, certain social punishments lie in wait for those who refuse to submit to the reproduction of the ritualised performative acts: “Gender is, thus, a construction that regularly conceals its genesis; the tacit collective agreement to perform, produce, and sustain discrete and polar genders as cultural fictions is obscured by the credibility of those productions—and the punishments that attend not agreeing to believe in them; the construction ‘compels’ our belief in its necessity and naturalness. The historical possibilities materialized through various corporeal styles are nothing other than those punitively regulated cultural fictions alternatively embodied in and deflected under duress.”⁶²

The question of how these contrasting paradigms could coexist within a social environment remains. The answer lies in the purpose of the performance. Imagine an institution in which a dominant paradigm permeated each of the perspectives outlined in Goffman’s articulation of the social environment. A single-sex boarding school will serve as an example. Through a synthesis of the two theories above, the mobilization of identity can be seen to occur in two distinct ways. First, competing presentations, in Goffman’s sense, by various actors coalesce to form a number of identities, the most powerful of which might be labelled the “ideal student.” The more widespread the buy-in to the ideal identity—for example, if the parents and staff agree with the dominant narrative—the stronger and more cohesive it becomes. Once established, the dominant identity assumes something of a definitive nature, and is further reinforced by subsequent ritualized re-

⁶¹ Seyla Benhabib, “Sexual Difference and Collective Identities” in Susan James and Stephanie Palmer, *Visible Women : Essays on Feminist Legal Theory and Political Philosophy* (Portland, OR: Hart Publishers, 2002), 140.

⁶² Butler, *Gender Trouble*, 178.

enactment of its most salient characteristics, in line with Butler's theory of performativity. In order to reinforce its privileged status, an element of punitiveness becomes necessary to encourage acceptance, even among those who might otherwise define themselves differently. In order to limit social censure, students who might otherwise seek alternative self-definition—or adopt a Castellian resistance identity—are encouraged to perpetuate the dominant narrative. Promising musicians might sign up for a rugby team, precluding their attending rehearsal, while talented scholars forego study to lift weights in the gym. Thus, the original identity, arbitrarily constructed and presented through the impression-management of a hegemonic group, becomes perpetrated and performed by those who might otherwise generate an alternate image. This view of performance and performativity as inputs and outputs of identity will be further explored in the context of the military in later chapters.

The Social Construction of Identity

Situating the establishment and cultivation of identity within the framework of a dialogical social process allows further examination of the ways in which individual and collective identities are formed and managed. Broadly speaking, social constructivism is a theory that places an emphasis on shared knowledges and ideas as the major influence of social behavior. Alexander Wendt outlines two basic characteristics: “(1) that the structures of human association are determined primarily by shared ideas rather than material forces, and (2) that the identities and interests of the purposive actors are constructed by these shared ideas rather than given by human nature.”⁶³

In *The Social Construction of Reality*, Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann affirm the concept “that reality is socially constructed” and their subsequent examination of the process by which this occurs is instructive to an investigation of how identities are formed.⁶⁴ Far from arguing for an absence of a “real world,” Berger and Luckmann posit that the construction of reality takes two forms, the objective and subjective.⁶⁵ The objective can be seen as the structural portion of reality that is constructed outside of the self, and this “interrelationship with an environment” manifests itself in a number of ways,

⁶³ Alexander Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 1.

⁶⁴ Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge* (London, UK: Penguin, 1967), 1.

⁶⁵ Berger & Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality*, 47-183.

most notably in the creation of “institutions” in which the habitualized actions of actors appear coherent enough to allow typification.⁶⁶ Conversely, the subjective reality addresses the manner in which the individual is “inducted into participation in the societal dialectic.”⁶⁷ Berger and Luckmann argue that the “internalization of reality” occurs by two main processes, “primary” and “secondary” socialization.⁶⁸ Primary socialization is foundational, and the process by which “the individual’s first world is constructed.”⁶⁹ Primary socialization occurs between the subject and his or her significant others—parents being a common example. This process is chiefly emotional, and ends “when the concept of the generalized other (and all that goes with it) has been established in the consciousness of the individual.”⁷⁰ Berger and Luckmann’s use of the term “generalized other” is drawn directly from Mead and indicates that the subject is capable of social interaction with both specific and homogenized others, in other words, a society.⁷¹ The individual has been equipped with a self with which to interact with the world.

This process has a direct parallel with Mead’s theory on the creation of the Self. As previously noted, Mead views the Self as having two components, Me and the I. These can be broadly described as outcomes of primary and secondary socialization. The Me is formed through “organization of the particular attitudes of other individuals toward himself and toward one another in the specific social acts in which he participates with them,” and through Berger and Luckmann’s lens, this is a result of interaction with significant others, usually in the early stages of life.⁷² Once the Me is formed, the process of secondary socialisation can occur, in which the I engages with the generalised attitudes of a social environment. The use of Goffman’s terminology is deliberate here to emphasize the dramaturgical characteristic of secondary socialization. Given its foundational role in establishing the lens through which an individual’s secondary socialization can occur, it is reasonable to suggest that the majority of presentation of the self takes place during secondary socialization. This argument is consistent with Berger and Luckmann’s view that primary socialization is predominantly a learning process; the individual is receiving

⁶⁶ Berger & Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality*, 48.

⁶⁷ Berger & Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality*, 129.

⁶⁸ Berger & Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality*, 129.

⁶⁹ Berger & Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality*, 135.

⁷⁰ Berger & Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality*, 137.

⁷¹ Berger & Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality*, 133.

⁷² Mead, *Mind, Self and Society*, 158.

knowledge that informs subsequent dramaturgical interaction with the generalized other.⁷³ Acts of presentation prior to secondary socialization increase the likelihood of social embarrassment, since the Me is lacking elements of information that allow the I to more fully appreciate the social environment. Thus, in jurisprudence, for example, we hold minors to different standards of culpability based on their relatively limited knowledge and experience of meaningful engagement in society. The concept of Primary and Secondary socialization will later provide a useful framework with which to critically examine the formation of military identities, particularly in the context of the ongoing debate surrounding whether values are primarily brought into the military by recruits, or taught by the organization through primary socialization that occurs in the early stages of basic training.⁷⁴

The establishment of an identity facilitates the subsequent process of secondary socialization. Berger and Luckman see secondary socialization as interaction with a variety of “sub worlds,” whereby the primary self is exposed to forces that may differ from the data that informed the creation of the primary identity.⁷⁵ It is in this realm that concepts of identity and the self are challenged and re-negotiated.

The framework of secondary socialization is a useful lens through which to investigate other concepts of identity theory. In *Stigma*, Goffman presents the concept of “information control” as a means of limiting the awareness of a disagreeable social or physical trait that may discredit an individual’s social standing.⁷⁶ This suggests that processes of socialization—and by extension, the presentation of an identity—are characterized not only by what is apparent, but also what is hidden from others.

Symbolic Interactionism

Symbolic interactionism provides a framework within which to place many of the previously discussed concepts. Symbolic interactionism builds on a number of theorists’ work, in particular Mead, and emphasises the importance of shared symbols in the establishment and re-iteration of social interactions. According to Stryker, the basic model of

⁷³ Berger & Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality*, 137.

⁷⁴ James E. Dorman, "ROTC Cadet Attitudes : A Product of Socialization or Self-Selection?," *Journal of Political and Military Sociology* 4, no. Fall (1976).

⁷⁵ Berger & Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality*, 138.

⁷⁶ Erving Goffman, *Stigma : Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity* (New York, NY: J. Aronson, 1974), 41.

symbolic interactionism contains a number of distinctive characteristics. First, social interaction takes place within a “named or classified” environment.⁷⁷ The classifications relevant to the environment are learned through repeated social interaction, as is the appropriate behavior in relation to that environment. Among these classifications are “symbols” that are used to assign roles and positions in the social environment.⁷⁸ These roles are recognized by those acting in accordance with the norms of the environment, which helps to reinforce the positions and roles as defined by the social situation. Self-recognition is also part of the interaction, during which individuals “reflexively appl[y] positional designations.”⁷⁹ The combination of these acts of labelling and role assignment informs the individual’s understanding of the behaviors appropriate to a given situation. Of note here, “behavior is the product of [the] role-making process,” but is a dialogical process molded and re-negotiated during the social interaction itself.⁸⁰ That said, while the defining process does not dictate behavior *per se*, it may serve to bound the possible types of behavior considered appropriate in a social situation.⁸¹ The flexibility inherent in the “larger social structures” governs the amount of improvisation available to an actor in a given social environment.⁸² Finally, the process is being continually remade, meaning that, as Stryker points out, “changes can occur in the character of definitions, in the names and class terms those definitions use, and in the possibilities for interaction; and such changes can in turn lead to changes in the larger social structures within which the interactions take place.”⁸³

In *Masculinities*, R.W. Connell’s definition of the term masculinity echoes the relationships and interactions inherent in symbolic interactionism: “‘Masculinity,’ to the extent the term can be briefly defined at all, is simultaneously a place in gender relations, the practices through which men and women engage that place in gender, and the effects of these practices in bodily experience, personality and culture.”⁸⁴ The centrality of the masculine as informing behavioral norms in the military is evident in research into the

⁷⁷ Stryker, *Symbolic Interactionism*, 53.

⁷⁸ Stryker, *Symbolic Interactionism*, 54.

⁷⁹ Stryker, *Symbolic Interactionism*, 54.

⁸⁰ Stryker, *Symbolic Interactionism*, 55.

⁸¹ Stryker, *Symbolic Interactionism*, 55.

⁸² Stryker, *Symbolic Interactionism*, 55.

⁸³ Stryker, *Symbolic Interactionism*, 55.

⁸⁴ R.W. Connell, *Masculinities*, (Crows Nest, NSW : Allen & Unwin, 2005), 71.

informal, and in some case formal, boundaries confining female presentation of the feminine in military social environments. Becoming “one of the boys” is a common strategy deployed by female defense personnel to smooth over gender differences.⁸⁵ The power of masculinities in the context of interactions that reinforce extant military identities will be examined in a later chapter.

In short, the main difference between social constructivism and symbolic interactionism lies in their scopes. Social constructivism seeks to explain how shared ideas and knowledge create a knowable society. On a more micro scale, symbolic interactionism is interested in shared knowledge at the level of interaction, seeking to understand how common understandings of symbols guide and determine the outcome of these interactions. Thus, in a manner similar to social constructivism, symbolic interactionism describes a form of social dialogue in which shared knowledges and symbols define an interaction in which roles are created. These roles subsequently influence the behavioral norms that are appropriate within that particular situation. The important link here is between shared knowledges and behavioral norms. For Stryker, human behavior that is carried out habitually, that is, consistent with roles born of shared understandings, is unproblematic. Conversely, it is possible for an individual to be presented with a social situation in which there are no “ready-made definitions in fully articulated form,” requiring improvisational work to create these on the spot.⁸⁶ This introduces a reasonable amount of risk to the interaction, as it is not certain that the other participants will agree with the presented definition. A second possible source of problematic social interactions, which Stryker does not explicitly outline, occurs when an individual refuses to accept the consensus view of some or all of the content of the shared knowledges, thereby dislocating the ability to role-play accurately.

It therefore becomes clear that through the lens of symbolic interactionism, harmonious social interaction is fundamentally dependent on two factors; consistency in the dissemination of shared understandings, or symbols, constructed in the course of an individual’s primary socialization, and a willingness to perform and present appropriate roles

⁸⁵ Deanne Gibbon, “Unexpected Turbulence : The Cultural, Gender-Based Challenges Facing Female Pilots in the Australian Defence Force,” in *Absent Aviators : Gender Issues in Aviation*, ed. Jane Neal-Smith Donna Bridges, Albert J. Mills (Surrey, UK: Ashgate, 2014), 124.

⁸⁶ Stryker, *Symbolic Interactionism*, 57.

or identities in a given social environment. The interplay between these two factors will be relevant in the later analysis as we explore how certain identities such as masculinity are prioritized in organizations such as the military.

II

The analysis will now shift from identity, and focus on institutional legitimacy. More specifically, this section will explore the factors that lend military organizations legitimacy as viewed both by its governmental masters and also the society that forms its recruiting base. As in the previous section, the aim is to present some theoretical frameworks that will later be applied specifically to the US Air Force in order to more closely appreciate the elements that contribute to its legitimacy in the context of the Western liberal democracy of the United States.

The Concept of Representation

Hannah Pitkin has written extensively on the idea of representation, a discourse that has relevance for this project's answer to the question of whether a military organization must reflect the society it serves. Despite popular views of ancient Greek democracy, Pitkin traces the genesis of a recognizable concept of representation to the Middle Ages, when church officials began to be considered the "mystical embodiment" or earthly proxies of Christ and the Apostles.⁸⁷ This occurred in parallel with the emergence of legal thought that considered a community as "a representative person."⁸⁸ These two ideas coalesced and evolved into a broader consensus that a spokesperson for a group or community represented its embodiment, such as a king, who was seen as an emblematic of his kingdom.⁸⁹

Subsequent developments contributed to the expansion of this idea of representation. Kings enlarged their network of advisors, resulting in the advent of parliamentary bodies. Although the purpose of these bodies was representative, it was in the reverse sense to our contemporary democratic understanding; they were formed to represent the king, not the people.⁹⁰ It was not until the English Civil War that agency became indelibly

⁸⁷ Hanna Fenichel Pitkin, *Representation* (New York, NY: Atherton Press, 1969), 2.

⁸⁸ Pitkin, *Representation*, 2.

⁸⁹ Pitkin, *Representation*, 2.

⁹⁰ Pitkin, *Representation*, 3.

linked with representation, when the Parliament acted on its own following the execution of King Charles I.⁹¹

In *The Concept of Representation*, Pitkin seeks to answer two questions relating to representation; “in what sense can something be considered as present although in fact it is not? And, second, who is doing the ‘considering’?”⁹² In developing her theory, she outlines a number of different types of representation. The first, which she draws from the works of Thomas Hobbes and others, is what she describes as the “Authorization View.”⁹³ Within this paradigm, individuals or entities are charged as a representative by virtue of their being authorized to act in some manner. This authority is formally bounded—giving rise to an alternative description as a “formalistic view” of representation—and legitimized purely on the basis of these boundaries.⁹⁴ In other words, “there is no such thing as representing well or badly; either he represents or he does not,” and the mandate of representation is removed if the boundaries are infringed upon.⁹⁵ Although there are elements of the Authorization view in many institutions in a contemporary liberal democracy, it is rare for representation to be treated as a “black box,” with the contents outside the realm of criticism.⁹⁶

A form of representation sharing characteristics with the Authorization view is articulated by Pitkin as “representation as acting for.”⁹⁷ The key distinction here lies in the execution of the acts that the representative is charged to perform. In the case of the Authorization view outlined above, the acts are formally bounded; and, as Pitkin suggests, they would generally “be defined in terms of formal arrangements that initiate or terminate the activity, not in terms of the nature of that activity itself.”⁹⁸ The “acting for” model introduces a qualitative element to the representing, by which a decision can be made as to *how well* the agent has represented. Pitkin posits the “acting for” model as working in the opposite sense of the Authorization view, as it implies an accountability that is ab-

⁹¹ Pitkin, *Representation*, 4.

⁹² Hanna Fenichel Pitkin, *The Concept of Representation* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1967), 9.

⁹³ Pitkin, *The Concept of Representation*, 39.

⁹⁴ Pitkin, *The Concept of Representation*, 39.

⁹⁵ Pitkin, *The Concept of Representation*, 39.

⁹⁶ Pitkin, *The Concept of Representation*, 39.

⁹⁷ Pitkin, *The Concept of Representation*, 113.

⁹⁸ Pitkin, *The Concept of Representation*, 114.

sent in Hobbes' model. An analogy might be made here between the conduct of a state's ambassador, who is empowered to represent the interests and views of the state exactly, and an elected member of a parliament, who, despite being selected as the representative of an electorate, usually has a relatively wide scope for action that may not accord with the wishes of the electorate.

A third type of representation suggested by Pitkin is "Descriptive Representation."⁹⁹ This refers to representation that results in a body resembling a microcosm of a larger whole. This type of representation is evident in the work of John Adams, who reflected that a legislature "should be an exact portrait, in miniature, of the people at large, as it should think, feel, reason and act like them [...] it should be an equal representation of their constituents; or, in other words, equal interests among the people should have equal interests in the representative body."¹⁰⁰

An entity constructed to "mirror" something else that is not present embodies this model. This model is based on the idea that political representation of an interest, such as an ethnic minority, is more effective if the representative shares an identity with his or her constituents. This element of Pitkin's theory is particularly relevant to this project, and later analysis will address the question of whether the military needs to reflect society by having a similar demographic make up.

Finally, Pitkin articulates a type of representation she describes as "Symbolic."¹⁰¹ Symbolic representation is characterized by the use of a symbol to take the place of that which cannot be present. While this is commonly mobilized in the form of an inanimate object, such as a national flag, an animate object can also act as the symbol that embodies the entity it represents. The most obvious example here would be a monarch or other type of head of state.

It should be clear from this short analysis that representation is rarely embodied exclusively in any one of these models. Rather, modern forms of representation exhibit a hybrid nature, combining a number of these characterisations. Indeed it could be argued that the most legitimate representative individual or body is one that blends as many of

⁹⁹ Pitkin, *The Concept of Representation*, 61.

¹⁰⁰ John Adams and Charles Francis Adams, *The Works [of] John Adams, Second President of the United States*, vol. IV (New York, NY: AMS Press, 1971), 205.

¹⁰¹ Pitkin, *The Concept of Representation*, 92.

these types as possible. The following analysis of the representativeness of the military will continue and elaborate on this line of inquiry.

A Legitimate Military

One of the main aims of this thesis is to understand mechanisms by which a military organization is legitimized, with the aim of assessing whether a representative military might be considered more legitimate in a liberal democracy than one that is not. The following section will consider some theoretical analyses of political legitimacy in an effort to draw out some links that might aid in more deeply understanding military legitimacy.

The question of military legitimacy has two facets. First, it is concerned with the right of a defence force to hold the monopoly on organized violence in a state. Second, it relates to the organization's right to act as a representative of its government. It is the second half of the question that is of most interest in this analysis. Max Weber wrote extensively on the problem of legitimacy in the political order, most notably in *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization*. Although he was ostensibly concerned with the legitimacy of a political order, he declared his observations to be relevant to all "social action which involves social relationships."¹⁰² According to Weber, the legitimacy of a social order is built on four bases, "tradition," "legality," "absolute value," and "values."¹⁰³

Tradition contributes to the legitimacy of an organisation due to the general tendency to believe "in the legitimacy of what has always existed."¹⁰⁴ This is clearly evident in the case of the military, which in many liberal democracies, and certainly in the case of the US and Australia, is one of the most enduring public institutions in the land. An organization that is constituted on a legally sound basis is often viewed as more legitimate than one that is not. Again the military in a liberal democracy such as the US generally enjoys a high level of legal legitimacy. For example, in the US, the existence of the air force is grounded in specific acts of law, such as the *National Security Act of 1947*, that

¹⁰²Max Weber, *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization*, trans., A. Henderson & T. Parsons (New York, NY : The Free Press of Glencoe, 1947), 124.

¹⁰³ Weber, *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization*, 130.

¹⁰⁴ Weber, *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization*, 130.

brought the USAF into existence.¹⁰⁵ Weber's third basis of legitimacy lies in the general understanding of the worth, or "absolute value" of an organization.¹⁰⁶ The worth of a military organization is frequently described in instrumental terms, for instance, the US Air Force's mission statement is "to fly fight and win...in air, space and cyberspace."¹⁰⁷ As the only government organization resourced to conduct full-spectrum airpower operations, the US Air Force enjoys a high level of legitimacy related to its absolute value since it faces no real existential competition. Of course there are additional inputs that influence the general belief of the absolute value of the Air Force - the most obvious being professional competence. As the world's most technologically advanced air force, the USAF is capable of a high level of precision in the application of its airpower effects, further contributing to the assessment of its absolute value.

Finally, an organization can be viewed as legitimate by virtue of the values it appears to represent. In this respect, an organisation that inspires as a "model to imitate" will be viewed as more legitimate than one that espouses questionable values in the eyes of society.¹⁰⁸ Compared to the other three elements of legitimacy, this is the most intangible and difficult to control. Despite official espousal of virtuous values, an organization will suffer damage if the conduct of its members is seen to contrast significantly with the official line. This has been regularly demonstrated in a series of scandals that have engulfed the military academies in Australia and the US.¹⁰⁹ Any perceived gap between official values and those indicated by behavioral norms is even more controversial in a military organization because taxpayers fund it. Awareness of the tension between perceived and official values was evident in the Chief of the Australian Army's video address, that subsequently spread virally throughout the world, leading to his invitation to address the UN International Women's Day Conference in 2013, in which he reiterated

¹⁰⁵ *National Security Act of 1947, US Code*, 80th Cong., 1st sess., (26 July 1947).

¹⁰⁶ Weber, *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization*, 130.

¹⁰⁷ United States Air Force, "Our Mission", <http://www.airforce.com/learn-about/our-mission/>, (accessed 28 January 2015).

¹⁰⁸ Weber, *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization*, 130.

¹⁰⁹ The ADFA "Skype Scandal" and the emergence of allegations of sexual misconduct at the US Air Force Academy are two examples. Christopher Knaus and David Wroe, "Skype Affair Cadet Linked to Initiation Ring," *Canberra Times*, 15 October 2013, <http://www.canberratimes.com.au/national/skype-affair-Cadet-linked-to-initiation-ring-20131014-2vira.html> (accessed 3 May 2015); David Olinger and Noelle Phillips, "Air Force Academy Leaders Express Shame, Outrage Over Sex-related Crimes," *Denver Post*, 13 August 2014, http://www.denverpost.com/News/ci_26330365/Air-Force-Academy-leaders-express-shame-outrage-over-sexrelated-crimes (accessed 3 May 2015).

the Army's values in relation to the treatment of women and advised those who did not share the same values to "get out."¹¹⁰

While Weber writes broadly of political legitimization, various other theorists have considered the ways in which the specific relationships between the Government, the military, and society are negotiated and legitimated. In *On War*, Carl von Clausewitz outlined a "paradoxical trinity" that must be balanced "like an object suspended between three magnets"; the constitutive elements being violence, chance and reason.¹¹¹ Clausewitz broadens the metaphor by correlating the element of "violence" with the people, "chance" with the army, and "reason" with the polity. The Clausewitzian rationale behind the trinity need not concern us at this point, but the concept of a triangular relationship among a government, the military and the people can be used to graphically chart the manner in which the relationships between each entity are legitimized. Figure 1 shows such a "triangle of legitimacy" in a liberal democracy.¹¹²

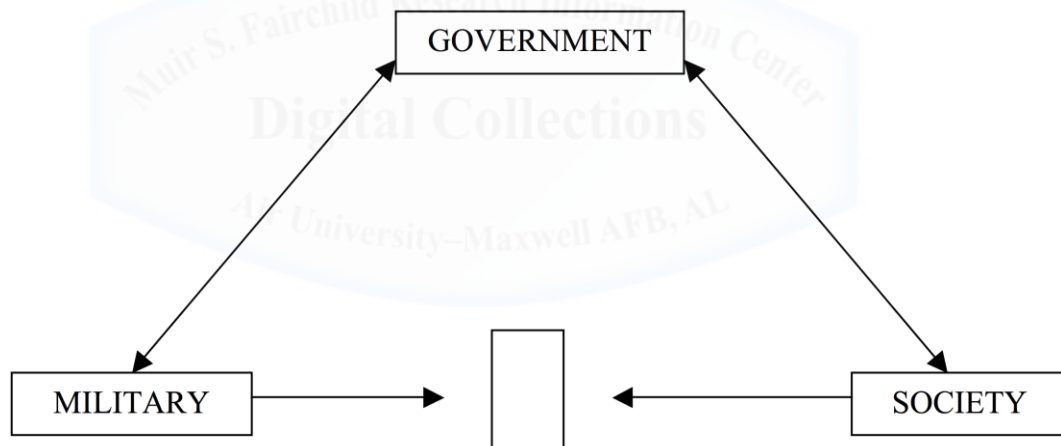


Figure 1 – The “Triangle” of Legitimacy

Source: Author's unpublished Master's Thesis "Religious Diversity in the Australian Defence Force: Towards a Representative Military."

¹¹⁰ The Australian Army, "Message from The Chief of Army", <http://www.army.gov.au/Our-work/Speeches-and-transcripts/Message-from-the-Chief-of-Army>, (accessed 6 February 2015).

¹¹¹ Clausewitz, *On War*, 89.

¹¹² This "triangle of legitimacy" was originally outlined in an unpublished dissertation "Religious Diversity in the Australian Defence Force: Towards a Representative Defence Military" (2009) by the author. The dissertation was submitted to satisfy a component of the degree of Master of Human Rights at the University of Sydney.

The relationships between the government and society, and the government and the military are represented with unbroken arrows, indicating that the relationships are readily legitimized by recognized processes. In the case of the government/society relationship, the regular election of government representatives by society provides a robust and respected method of legitimizing the relationship.

The government and military relationship is somewhat more complex. As outlined in Chapter Two, there is some debate in relation to the military's status in relation to the government. In the Janowitzian sense, the military constitutes a mobilized element of society, whereas Huntington would argue that the military is and should remain a distinct group. Peter Feaver suggests the framework of "agency theory" as a way of blending Huntington's institutional theory with Janowitz's sociological approach.¹¹³ Thus, for the purposes of the "triangle of legitimacy," the "military" point represents an entity that is in a principle-agent relationship with the government. As with the government/society side of the triangle, the government/military dyad is legitimized by a long-established process, which may be described as "selection." As representatives of the government, there must be an appropriate level of certainty that military personnel will carry out orders as directed, and it therefore becomes critical that the "right" people, from the perspective of the government, are chosen. In order to achieve this, transparent and formalized procedures exist that place people with relevant skills and attributes into appropriate positions, and in the case of very senior ranking officers, the selection process is carried out by civilian government members.

While the methods of legitimizing the government/society and government/military dyads are obvious, the military/society relationship proves problematic. This is indicated in Figure 1 by the inclusion of a block. The Janowitz/Huntington debate typifies the nature of this relationship, pointing to an absence of clarity as to how a military organization can be legitimized in the eyes of the broader society. Here Weber's theory of legitimacy may help chart a way forward. As noted above, Weber suggests four ways in which a social relationship may be legitimized; tradition, legality, absolute value and values (in the sense of something being worthy of imitation). Tradition can serve as a

¹¹³ Peter Feaver, *Armed Servants : Agency, Oversight, and Civil-Military Relations* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003), 10.

strong legitimizing force, however, its utility is dependent on a mutual recognition of the value of that tradition. For example, scandals associated with military academies often prompt calls to close the institution.¹¹⁴ Similarly, legitimacy based on legality is also highly dependent on social norms. Despite the legality of the ban on homosexuals in the US military, the organization, and the US government, lost legitimacy in many sections of the community by resisting growing calls to end the ban.¹¹⁵ Legitimacy based on the absolute value of an organization is influential, however, in Western liberal democracies, there is a general expectation that government organizations will conform to domestic and international laws. The revelation that the CIA had practiced torture in its dealings with suspected terrorists in the wake of 11 September 2001, illustrated the danger to legitimacy posed by governmental agencies that flout laws in an effort to improve instrumental effectiveness.¹¹⁶ While three of Weber's legitimating factors are well established, as pointed out, they have limitations. Therefore, the method by which society might legitimize the military through considering it "worthy of imitation" demands closer investigation, and that will occur in the analysis chapter to come.¹¹⁷

Total Institutions

A final theory of use in this project is that of Erving Goffman's "Total Institution." In *Asylums*, Goffman introduces the concept of a total institution as "symbolized by the barrier to social intercourse with the outside and to departure that is often built right into the physical plant, such as locked doors, high walls, barbed wire, cliffs, water, forests, or moors."¹¹⁸ These barriers may not always be physical, and there are a variety of reasons why an individual might feel compelled to stay in a total institution. Of the five types of total institutions outlined by Goffman, the type corresponding most closely to the military are those that exist to provide some sort of instrumental purpose in order to achieve an

¹¹⁴ Bill O'Chee, "ADFA Has Had its Day and Should be Closed", *Brisbane Times*, <http://www.brisbanetimes.com.au/it-pro/adfa-has-had-its-day-and-should-be-closed-20140610-39ve1.html>, (accessed 6 February 2015).

¹¹⁵ Aaron Belkin et al., "How to End Don't Ask, Don't Tell: A Roadmap of Political, Legal, Regulatory, and Organizational Steps to Equal Treatment", in Parco and Levy, eds., *Attitudes Aren't Free : Thinking Deeply About Diversity in the Us Armed Forces*, 226.

¹¹⁶ Dianne Feinstein, "Forward by Senate Select Committee on Intelligence Chairman Dianne Feinstein: Findings and Conclusions, Executive Summary", <http://www.intelligence.senate.gov/study2014/sscistudy1.pdf> (accessed 4 February 2015).

¹¹⁷ Weber, *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization*, 130.

¹¹⁸ Erving Goffman, *Asylums; Essays on the Social Situation of Mental Patients and Other Inmates* (Garden City, NY: Anchor Books, 1961), 4.

outcome.¹¹⁹ This is differentiated from most other total institutions that exist to reduce a threat to an individual or the public, or in some cases both. These differences notwithstanding, total institutions aim to achieve their purpose by dislocating the “inmates”’ sense of agency that allows them to “sleep, play, and work in different places, with different co-participants, under different authorities, and without an over-all rational plan.”¹²⁰ Goffman elaborates:

The central feature of total institutions can be described as a breakdown of the barriers ordinarily separating these three spheres of life. First, all aspects of life are conducted in the same place and under the same single authority. Second, each phase of the member’s daily activity is carried on in the immediate company of a large batch of others, all of whom are treated alike and required to do the same thing together. Third, all phases of the day’s activities are tightly scheduled, with one activity leading at a prearranged time into the next, the whole sequence of activities being imposed from above by a system of explicit formal rulings and a body of officials. Finally, the various enforced activities are brought together into a single rational plan purportedly designed to fulfil the official aims of the institution.¹²¹

While the specific tactics to achieve this breaking down of barriers varies between institutions, a common characteristic is a level of de-personalisation that occurs immediately on arrival. It was suggested above that the induction or basic training inherent in military service could be viewed as a form of primary socialization in line with Berger and Luckmann’s theory. The extent to which the military deconstructs the familiar, but distant, world of the new recruit creates new dependent relationships between the Cadets and those who surround them who are capable of imparting the knowledge they need to graduate. As discussed previously, one of the purposes of primary socialization is an introduction to the generalized other in order to inform the creation of a “me” through oppositional comparison. The unique ability of the military to separate Cadets from their established social environment—through immersion in a total institution—facilitates the construction of new identities through the re-negotiation of generalized others. The pro-

¹¹⁹ Goffman, *Asylums*, 5.

¹²⁰ Goffman, *Asylums*, 6.

¹²¹ Goffman, *Asylums*, 6.

cess by which this occurs, as well as the behavioral norms that result will form the keystone of the data analysis later in this project.

Conclusion

This chapter has outlined the major theoretical frameworks that will be used throughout this project. The concept of identity will lie at the center of the analysis to follow, and it has therefore been necessary to differentiate it from broader concepts of the self. William Connolly's *Identity/Difference* introduced the oppositional character of identity as it has been defined in this chapter, and this idea was further developed through an exploration of the presentation and performative aspects of identity. Castells' three broad types of identity - legitimizing, resistance and project - were introduced, and the personal and group manifestations of these will be described below. Social constructivism has been presented as an important theory that will be used to help understand how identities are deployed and reinforced at the macro scale in the military. At the micro level, symbolic interactionism will provide a lens through which to explore social interactions by focusing on the mobilization of symbols in creating shared understandings that inform the creation of identities and behavioural norms. In the second part of the chapter, a number of additional theories were introduced that will help build understanding of some of the more structural elements of the project. In particular, theories relating to the representativeness and legitimacy of the military organization were discussed, and these will be developed in later chapters. Finally, Erving Goffman's concept of the total institution was briefly presented, and the idea of military basic training institutions, such as the Air Force Academy, as total institutions will be developed throughout the remainder of the work. With the theoretical landscape now sketched, the next chapter will critically examine identity in the Air Force Academy, blending quantitative and qualitative data in an effort to operationalize the theory.

Chapter 4

Identity Construction at The United States Air Force Academy

As a military academy, USAFA fits neatly into Erving Goffman's category of a total institution. After Cadets board the shuttle bus on their induction day, they are effectively cut off from "social intercourse with the outside," and their every waking moment is scrutinized and judged by senior Cadets who oversee basic training in order to mold the new Cadets into identities that are acceptable within "their" academy.¹ Such social isolation has a powerful effect and replicates a lack of personal agency that many of these Cadets have not experienced since childhood. The combination of isolation with strong social guidance echoes Berger and Luckmann's primary socialization, the Cadets' parents having been displaced by senior Cadets.

This chapter draws together the theory presented in the previous section and blends it with quantitative and qualitative data in order to contextualize and operationalize the theoretical frameworks. In common with the previous chapters, the analysis will remain within the discourses of sociology and social psychology, and I intend to make an argument for a greater focus on identity as a crucial enabler of cultural change within the US Air Force Academy.

In this chapter, my analysis will consist of four broad sections. First, quantitative data will be presented in order to establish a baseline against which subsequent analysis will be conducted. This quantitative data will be drawn from a variety of sources including official US government publications. The data will be used to establish foundational understandings surrounding the extant levels of diversity at the Academy.

Second, I will examine qualitative data drawn from a variety of focus groups with Cadets at the Academy. These focus groups were conducted in February 2015 with Cadets from a variety of year groups: "Four-degrees" or freshman Cadets (one focus group—male only), "Three-degrees" or sophomore Cadets (two focus groups—one male only group) and "First-degrees" or seniors (two focus groups). The focus groups were

¹ Erving Goffman, *Asylums : Essays on the Social Situation of Mental Patients and other Inmates*, (Garden City, NY : Anchor Books, 1961), 4.; David Emrich, *A Year in the Blue*, WHO Productions, 105 min., 2014, digital versatile disc, 002:00.

conducted during scheduled academic class sessions and were semi-structured in order to facilitate discussion and help build narratives that described the Cadets' experience at the Academy. The questions that guided the discussions can be found in Appendix A.

Third, I will examine the existing documentation that governs diversity policy in the US Air Force. In particular, I will critically examine the objectives of this policy in light of the quantitative and qualitative data in order to assess how effective it has been in working toward these goals. In particular, the data will be analyzed to ascertain how effectively extant policy is attracting, recruiting, developing and retaining "diverse" members of society.

Finally, having utilized the data to sketch the diversity landscape, the theory outlined in the previous chapter will be mobilized in an effort to explain how identity has contributed to the demographic makeup of the USAFA, as well as its ability to establish and maintain a diverse and reflective workplace.

How Diverse Is the United States Air Force Officer Corps?

In 2014, the RAND Corporation, a US federally funded non-profit think tank, published a report titled "Improving Demographic Diversity in the U.S. Air Force Officer Corps." In the report, the authors highlight "the relative scarcity of minorities and women among senior leaders (i.e. colonel and above) in the uniformed Air Force."² The report's analysis is based on statistical data that indicates a general drop in minority and female participation with increasing rank.³ But also evident in the data is the fact that the starting point, that is, the number of minorities and females that feed into the rank system, is not reflective of the demographics of US society. Thus, while it is noteworthy and problematic that participation levels of minorities and females decrease as rank increases, the effect is magnified due to lower representation at the recruitment stage. For example, women make up 50.8 percent of US society, and yet their strongest level of representation is at the O-1 rank level (2nd lieutenant) where females make up 19% of the total.⁴ This steadily decreases to under 8% at the O-7 level (brigadier general) before increasing slightly to

² Nelson Lim et al., *Improving Demographic Diversity in the U.S. Air Force Officer Corps*, (RAND Corporation : 2014), iii.

³ Lim et al., *Improving Demographic Diversity*, xi-x.

⁴ United States Census Bureau. "State and County [sic] Quickfacts."
<http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/00000.html> (accessed 15 April 2015).

12% at the O-8 (major general) level. The relatively low number of flag rank officers (O-7 to O-10) is a factor contributing to these numbers; however, it is crucial to note at this point that the experiential progression model used in the military, in which it is expected that the majority of officers will rise through each officer rank, means that the representativeness of the cohort that “comes in the door” at the O-1 level constitutes the raw material available to make Generals.

Also unreflective is the participation of members of ethnic minorities. While the RAND study only considers African-American and Hispanic ethnic groups, these are by far the largest minority groups in the US and therefore provide useful datasets for the purpose of this analysis. As is the case with female participation, Hispanic and African-American participation is comparatively low when compared to the demographic distribution in broader US society. While Hispanics and African Americans make up 17.1% and 13.2% of the population of the USA respectively, they make up less than half of these figures as a percentage of officers at the O-1 level.⁵ As with women, African Americans (6%) and Hispanics (8%) start with low levels of representation that gradually decrease as rank increases.⁶

As suggested above, the Academy faces a significant challenge in diversifying due to the fact that the numbers of demographic minorities—including women—entering the institution are quite low. As reflected in the RAND study into the demographic makeup of the overall Air Force officer corps, the representation of female, Hispanic, and African-American members in the junior officer ranks is less than half that of broader US society.⁷ Historical data, current as of 2005, relating to the relative size of the candidate pools prior to appointment helps provide some understanding as to why these figures are so low.⁸

Since the first Cadets entered the Academy in 1955, over 1,125,090 individuals have inquired into admission. Of these, 28% proceed with an application for entry. 17%

⁵ US Census Bureau, “State and County [sic] Quickfacts.”

⁶ Lim et al., *Improving Demographic Diversity*, x.

⁷ Lim et al., *Improving Demographic Diversity*, x.

⁸ The data contained in this section is drawn from: United States Air Force Academy, *Statistical Summaries of USAFA Cadets & Graduates* (Colorado Springs, CO: HQ USAFA Institutional Research and Assessment Division, 2005), and United States Air Force Academy, *Descriptive Characteristics and Comparisons for the Class of 2006*, (Colorado Springs, CO: HQ USAFA Institutional Research and Assessment Division, 2006).

of applicants have been female; however, this figure should take into account the fact that the first class containing female Cadets did not enter the Academy until 1976. The admissions process is complex and requires aspiring Cadets to meet specific entry requirements in addition to gaining a nomination, usually from a congressional member associated with the candidate's hometown. This process increasingly reduces the number of applicants until a group of qualified candidates is identified, and it is from this group that those who are to be offered appointments are selected. The numbers pertaining to gender are instructive. As outlined above, at the application stage, females make up 17% of the pool. This reduces to 10% at the nomination stage and further reduces to the point where females constitute only 8% of the qualified applicant pool. In terms of subsequent entry, females have historically made up 9% of Cadets who have entered the Academy. While the figures mislead somewhat due to the relatively late admittance of women into the Academy, the most telling statistic is the drop in numbers between the application and qualification stage. Although a detailed analysis of these types of external factors lies outside of the scope of this work, this reduction would seem to suggest the existence of structural barriers that serve to disqualify women on the basis of certain factors. For instance, on average, males score higher than females in the Mathematic and Natural Science components of the American College Test (ACT) and Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT). Given the strong focus on mathematics and science in the Academy curriculum (exemplified by the fact that all Cadets who graduate are awarded a Bachelor of Science degree, regardless of their major), it is possible that an unintended educational bias toward males exists in the conduct of the recruitment process.⁹

Historical application data relating to the US Air Force Academy shows that the percentage of females offered an appointment comprises 13.8% of all applicants.¹⁰ When compared with the statistics for males (where 22.6% of applicants are successful in gaining an offer of appointment) this is a low conversion rate. Academy records of ACT and SAT scores indicate that males consistently score higher in mathematics and natural/science components of these examinations, while females often outperform the males in benchmark testing in the non-hard science disciplines of English, verbal reasoning and

⁹ United States Air Force Academy, *Curriculum Handbook: 2014-2015*, (Colorado Springs, CO: 2014), 82.

¹⁰ United States Air Force Academy, "Applicant Data," *Statistical Summaries of USAFA Cadets & Graduates* (Colorado Springs, CO: HQ USAFA Institutional Research and Assessment Division, 2005),

social studies.¹¹ There are also gaps apparent in the ACT and SAT performance of groups from less affluent socio-economic backgrounds.¹² For example, based on an aggregation of the 2014 SAT scores, Hispanic students scored an average of 455 in the mathematics section of the test, while African-Americans maintained an average of 429. By contrast, the “white” average was 534.¹³

Of the 32 courses that make up the Academy’s core curriculum, 15 of these are drawn from the basic sciences (such as biology, chemistry, mathematics and physics), engineering (including aeronautics and astronautics) and an interdisciplinary science and technology energy/systems option.¹⁴ While Cadets can major in a wide variety of subjects outside of the STEM disciplines, the focus of the core on the hard sciences results in all Cadets graduating with the degree of Bachelor of Science regardless of their major.

As outlined in the United States Air Force Diversity Strategic Roadmap, the USAF aims to “attract,” “recruit,” “develop,” and “retain” diverse members.¹⁵ The figures outlined above suggest that importance should be placed on the attraction and recruitment in order to feed the system with personnel who can be developed into higher-ranking officers.

The Attraction and Retention of Minority Groups

Ascertaining the extant levels of other types of diversity, such as religious affiliation, in the Air Force officer corps is more problematic. In stark contrast to the availability and detail of survey data pertaining to gender and ethnicity, there is a dearth of publicly released material relating to the distribution of religious preferences in the USAF.¹⁶ Thus, data must be spliced together from a variety of sources, which introduces imprecision to the figures. Additionally, it is possible to “mask” religious affiliation in a manner that is generally more difficult to achieve with gender and ethnicity. For example, Major

¹¹ United States Air Force Academy, “SAT & ACT data,” *Statistical Summaries of USAFA Cadets & Graduates*.

¹² Kaitlin Mulhere, “Flat SAT Scores”, *Inside Higher Ed*, 7 October 2014, <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2014/10/07/average-sat-scores-show-little-change> (accessed 13 April 2015).

¹³ Kaitlin Mulhere, “Flat SAT Scores”.

¹⁴ United States Air Force Academy, *Curriculum Handbook: 2014-2015*, (Colorado Springs, CO: 2014).

¹⁵ United States Air Force, *Diversity Strategic Roadmap*, (Air Force Global Diversity Division, AF/A1DV: 2014), <http://www.af.mil/Portals/1/documents/diversity/diversity-strategic-roadmap.pdf> (accessed 15 April 2015), 4.

¹⁶ Military Association of Atheists and Freethinkers, “Military Religious Demographics”, <http://militaryatheists.org/demographics/> (accessed 16 April 2015).

Nidal Malik Hasan who was convicted of killing 13 people in the 2009 Fort Hood shooting, ostensibly “as part of a jihad to protect Muslims from American military aggression” indicated “no religious preference” in service documentation.¹⁷ These difficulties notwithstanding, the data that is available indicates that, as with gender and ethnicity, the representation of minority religious affiliations is significantly lower in the Air Force Academy when compared with the broader US population. In a Cadet body of approximately 4000, those professing to be Muslim make up 0.003% of that population, or 11 personnel, based on data collected in 2011.¹⁸ Again, when compared against the representation of Muslims in the broader US demographic, this is significantly below the 0.6% national average. The under representativeness of other minority religions appears to follow this trend, with Buddhist adherents making up 0.004% of USAFA Cadets, and 0.6% of the broader US population.¹⁹

Because Cadets at the USAF Academy are in the very early stages of their military careers, the current inability to achieve two of the priorities outlined in the USAF *Diversity Strategic Roadmap* helps explain why the extant levels of diversity are lower than in civilian society. The Academy typically represents the first four years of officers’ military careers. As such, the Cadets are yet to be either significantly “developed” or identified as worthy of “retention.” And while the data providing the demographic background of Cadets who wash out, that is, leave the Academy and Air Force prior to graduation, is incomplete, it is reasonable to conclude that even if *all* of these Cadets were members of a demographic minority, the original levels of representation of Cadets at

¹⁷ Manny Fernandez, “Calling No Witnesses, Defendant in Fort Hood Shooting Rests His Case”, *New York Times*, 21 August 2013, <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/08/22/us/fort-hood-shooting-suspect-rests-his-case.html?ref=topics> (accessed 4 April 2015).; Yochi J. Dreazen, “Muslim Population in the Military Raises Difficult Issues”, *Wall Street Journal*, 9 November 2009, <http://www.wsj.com/articles/SB125755853525335343> (accessed 1 April 2015).

¹⁸ US Air Force Academy, “USAFA Quick Facts,” <http://www.usafa.af.mil/information/factsheets/factsheet.asp?id=21371> (accessed 16 April 2015).; Jenny Deam, “Air Force Academy adapts to Pagans, Druids, Witches and Wiccans”, *Los Angeles Times*, 26 November 2011, <http://articles.latimes.com/2011/nov/26/nation/la-na-air-force-pagans-20111127> (accessed 1 April 2015).

¹⁹ Barry A. Kosmin and Ariela Keysar, *American Religious Identification Survey: Summary Report*, (Hartford, CT: Trinity College, 2009), <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/metro/documents/aris030609.pdf> (accessed 16 April 2015). While a survey of College students was undertaken in 2013, this is the most recent nation-wide survey.

induction would still be unrepresentative of US society.²⁰ It seems clear then, that the USAFA is failing to attract and recruit members at the levels that would make the organization fully reflective of US society.

Conventional wisdom often points to the “nature” of the military in an effort to explain why the military is not the employer of choice for certain segments of society. Robert Maginnis reflects this view, remarking on female participation in combat: “Both civilian and uniform women, it is said, are clamouring for the ‘opportunity’ to serve in ground combat units. In fact, there is little evidence that women, in or out of uniform, seek these brutally demanding positions. It would be a daunting challenge to raise and maintain a sizeable corps of female combatants.”²¹ Maginnis proceeds to suggest that while men wish to join the combat arms of the military to fight, females join to further their careers.

Similar arguments have been presented to suggest why Muslims don’t want to join the military, such as this observation on the low levels of Muslim soldiers in the British military: “But the reason for the lack of [Muslim] interest in the army has always been dressed up. It had to do with Asians²² wanting higher aspirations and their parents want them to be doctors and lawyers. It had to do with the armed forces not being able to reach out to communities. It had to do with cultural and religious issues such as halal food. It had to do with the lack of role models. But the main issue is always ignored. That as a Muslim you do not want to go to another land and fight against ‘other Muslims.’ If you are 18 years-old and faced with this decision it is unlikely you will decide to join the army.”²³

These lines of argument selectively present “truisms” that obfuscate and serve to resist attempts to engage meaningfully with the reasons behind the low representation of

²⁰ As of 2005, and with respect to gender, the overall historical attrition rate (non graduation) of male and female Cadets is similar, with 33.3% for males and 32.8% for females. US Air Force Academy *Descriptive Characteristics and Comparisons for the Class of 2006*, “Table 5 Class Strength Statistics,” 22.

²¹ Robert L. Maginnis, *Deadly Consequences : How Cowards Are Pushing Women into Combat* (Washington D.C. : Regnery Publishing, 2013), 60.

²² The British usage of the term “Asian” encompasses people of South Asian ancestry, which includes India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka.

²³ Imaged Malik, “The reason Muslims won’t join the army is because they don’t want to kill other Muslims.” *Asian Image*, 6 February 2015, http://www.asianimage.co.uk/columnists/11777325.The_reason_Muslims_won___t_join_the_army_is_because_they_don___t_want_to_kill_other_Muslims/ (accessed 1 April 2015).

minorities in the military. For example, absent from the latter argument is any mention of the significant deployment of troops from Middle Eastern countries in support of operations against Islamic State insurgent forces in Iraq and Syria. And Maginnis' suggestion that cynical motives lie behind the female desire to join combat arms rests on similarly shaky logic, as he would have us believe that individuals would volunteer for service in a segment of the military that greatly increased their risk of injury or death for no other reason than to facilitate their rise through the rank system - an outcome that is neither guaranteed, nor realized, in the short term.

Through deconstructing the logic of conventional wisdom, another possibility emerges that may help explain the low levels of minority participation in the military. Rather than assigning fault to the individuals, this analysis will explore the possibility that it is the military itself that presents an image serving to limit its ability to attract and recruit a diverse workforce. This concept will be further unpacked later in this chapter.

The Development and Retention of Minority Groups

The data presented above suggest that the USAF faces a double bind in relation to the creation of inclusive workplaces that embrace demographic and global diversity. First, the number of members of minority groups that enter the organization is low, and second, these numbers decrease as individuals rise through the ranks. This is particularly noticeable in the case of women. The RAND study *Improving Demographic Diversity in the U.S. Air Force Officer Corps* shows a number of interesting trends relating to female participation in the USAF officer corps across the rank spectrum. At the O-3 to O-4 band, there is a significant drop in female representation. By combining data from a variety of sources, it seems reasonable to suggest that this might be due largely to the conflicting demands of childbirth. According to a CIA report, the average age of a mother having her first child in the USA is 25.4, with the average mother going on to have one more child, based on an average of 2.01 children per mother.²⁴ The National Longitudinal Study data indicates that the mean gap between siblings is 3.4 years, resulting in the average mother

²⁴Central Intelligence Agency, *The World Factbook: Mother's Mean Age at First Birth*, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/fields/2256.html> (accessed 16 April 2015).; Central Intelligence Agency, *The World Factbook: Total Fertility Rate*, <https://www.cia.gov/Library/publications/the-world-factbook/fields/2127.html> (accessed 16 April 2015).

giving birth to her second child at age 28.8.²⁵ In the Air Force, historical data suggests that promotion to O-4, or Major, occurs around 10 years of service; therefore, a female joining the air force at age 17 or 18 is likely to be having a second child around this promotion point. The reasons behind this drop of close to 4% in female participation in the USAF Officer Corps will be explored later in the chapter.²⁶

The Academy as a Total Institution

As suggested at the beginning of this chapter, the US Air Force Academy fits neatly into the category of a total institution as presented by Erving Goffman in his work *Asylums*. More specifically, it is among institutions clearly “established the better to pursue some workmanlike task and justifying themselves only on these instrumental grounds.”²⁷ This is reflected in the Academy’s motto of “Developing Leaders of Character.”²⁸ Upon arrival at the Academy, the Cadets’ induction into a total institution is clearly marked. As Goffman observes: “a basic social arrangement in modern society is that the individual tends to sleep, play, and work in different places, with different co-participants, under different authorities, and without an over-all rational plan.”²⁹ At the Academy, this “basic social arrangement” is inverted, as the Cadets are rapidly inducted into a system in which every moment of their day is regulated by senior Cadets and staff and endured alongside their fellow squadron members. For Goffman, the building of a barrier between the Cadets and the outside world “marks the first curtailment of self.”³⁰

Interestingly, Goffman bounds the total institution’s ability to enact cultural change: “Now it appears that total institutions do not substitute their own unique culture for something already formed; we deal with something more restricted than acculturation or assimilation. If cultural change does occur, it has to do, perhaps, with the removal of certain behavior opportunities and with failure to keep pace with recent social changes on the outside. Thus, if an inmate’s stay is long, what has been called ‘disculturation’ may

²⁵ Kasey S. Buckles and Elizabeth L. Munnich, “Birth Spacing and Sibling Outcomes,” *The Journal of Human Resources*, 47, no.3, (Summer 2012), 622.

²⁶ Nelson Lim et al., *Improving Demographic Diversity in the U.S. Air Force Officer Corps*, 3.

²⁷ Goffman, *Asylums*, 5.

²⁸ United States Air Force Academy, “Home Page, <http://www.usafa.af.mil> (accessed 16 April 2014).

²⁹ Goffman, *Asylums*, 6.

³⁰ Goffman, *Asylums*, 14.

occur - that is, an ‘untwining’ which renders him temporarily incapable of managing certain features of daily life on the outside, if and when he gets back to it.”³¹

But the ability of a total institution to substitute culture must be more complex than this and also dependent on the purpose of the institution. Goffman outlines five general types of total institutions, those for people who are either incapable and harmless to society, incapable and an unintentional threat to society, a clear threat to society, or seeking a retreat from the world. Finally, there are institutions that serve an instrumental purpose.³² Of these five groups, the first three are primarily concerned with containment; while some prisons and mental health facilities purport to provide rehabilitative care, the main focus is on the confinement of the individual for the good of themselves or society. Thus, the importance of cultural modification of the individual is greater than in a total institution that exists to provide an instrumental purpose. The behavioural expectations of the inmate of a prison are likely to be much looser than those of an Air Force Academy Cadet and therefore a more stringent acculturation process is necessary.

In order to assess the type of acculturation we are talking about here, we should move to examine the theoretical framework laid out in Berger and Luckman’s *The Social Construction of Reality*. As suggested above, the officer training model at many military academies has parallels with Berger and Luckman’s concept of “primary socialization.” Primary socialisation “is the first socialisation an individual undergoes in childhood, through which he becomes a member of society.”³³ In many respects, at the Academy, new Cadets are treated as children until they have proven themselves worthy. There are myriad examples that highlight the differences between acculturation at the Academy and other types of total institutions. For instance, mealtime during Basic Training is regimented in a way that the Cadets are unlikely to have experienced since early childhood:

The Cadets sit at attention on the edges of their seats, their backs straight and their shoulders down. Their heads are up but their eyes are cast low, looking at the Academy’s white plates with the eagle emblem at the twelve o’clock position. This is the only place they are permitted to look [...] “You will wait until your table commandant tells you to take a seat.

³¹ Goffman, *Asylums*, 13.

³² Goffman, *Asylums*, 4.

³³ Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality : A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge*, (London, UK : Penguin, 1967), 130.

At that point, you will sit down. You will move to the left of your chair, one step. With your right hand, you will pull your chair out. You'll sit down from the left-hand side. You will sit on the front one-third of your chair at position and attention. You will be one fist's distance away from the table. Your feet will be on the ground at a forty-five degree angle [...]
When you start eating, do not take big bites. What you do is you pick up your fork and you pick up your knife. You will cut a bite-sized piece. This is a bite you can eat instead of chew. Put it in your mouth. You will put your fork back down on your plate. You will not start chewing until you return your silverware to your plate.”³⁴

This description of Cadet mealtime provides evidence that, despite Goffman's suggestion to the contrary, the USAFA does indeed attempt to substitute culture in more intrusive ways than other total institutions and creates a second primary socialization for the new Cadets. Throughout Cadets' training at the Academy, they are exposed to ideals of behaviour and conduct as typified in the example of mealtime outlined above. Through semi-formal *in loco parentis* arrangement, senior Cadets and Academy staff members choose the types of behaviors they wish the Cadets to replicate in a manner similar to how Berger and Luckmann describe childhood: “Every individual is born into an objective social structure within which he encounters the significant others who are in charge of his socialisation. These significant others are imposed upon him. Their definitions of his situation are posited for him as objective reality. He is thus born not only into an objective social structure but also an objective social world. The significant others who mediate this world to him modify it in the course of mediating it. They select aspects of it in accordance with their own individual, biographically rooted idiosyncrasies. The social world is ‘filtered’ to the individual through this double selectivity.”³⁵

Thus, the end product, that is, a graduated Cadet, is as much a reflection of the senior Cadets' and staff members' designs as a child is reflective of its formative influences. This represents a fairly unremarkable observation; however, it is the content of the “individual, biographical rooted idiosyncrasies” that is of interest here. These form the bedrock of the socialization process, and their content is clearly crucial to the outcome of the process. This presents an important distinction between the primary socialization of a child and that of an Academy Cadet. While a parent has reasonably wide agency to pre-

³⁴ Diana Schemo, *Skies to Conquer : A Year Inside the Air Force Academy*, (Hoboken, N.J. : John Wiley & Sons, 2010), 28.

³⁵ Berger and Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality*, 131.

sent certain behavioral norms in support of the child's development, effectively bounded only by the limits of the law, the nature of the military requires tighter control over the messages or "individual, biographical rooted idiosyncrasies" that are presented to new Cadets. In other words, in order to maintain the consistency of the institutional persona, the Academy needs to closely manage the shared knowledge that is constructed through social interaction. Therefore, in the Academy sense, the messaging reflects less the individual idiosyncrasies of the Cadet training cadre or staff members and more a tightly controlled and managed "ideal." This difference notwithstanding, the social world is still filtered in a manner consistent with the process of primary socialization, meaning that the training cadre and staff wield considerable power in managing the construction of identities early in the Basic Cadets' time at the Academy.

While this messaging might be tightly controlled, it is deployed in a manner that serves to personalize it. Upon arrival, Basic Cadets are bombarded with criticism from the senior classes, who remind them that they are not yet a part of "their"—that is, the senior classes'—Academy.³⁶ Presenting a personalized message helps to create the impression that the attitudes that are being presented are genuinely those of the senior figure: "You will suffer to become a member of my Cadet wing. Your days of being weak are over. My cadre are the biggest, strongest, meanest Cadets you will ever meet."³⁷

This facilitates the process whereby "the child [or Cadet in this instance] takes on the significant others' role and attitudes, that is, internalizes them and makes them his own."³⁸ It is through this process that Mead's "Me" is constructed through the "organization of the particular attitudes of other individuals toward himself and toward one another in the specific social acts in which he participates with them."³⁹ It is clear therefore, that the *content* of this messaging is crucial to the development of a Basic Cadet's identity, and by extension, critical to the long-term culture of the institution, since the accession system of the Academy dictates that today's Basic Cadet becomes tomorrow's training cadre.

³⁶ Male freshman Cadet, Focus Group with Air Force Academy Cadets, 25 Feb 15.

³⁷ Schemo, *Skies to Conquer*, 253.

³⁸ Berger and Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality*, 131-132.

³⁹ George Herbert Mead, *Mind, Self and Society : From the Standpoint of a Social Behaviourist*, (Chicago, IL : The University of Chicago Press, 1934), 158.

The Content of the Academy Identity

As suggested above, in Goffman's process of primary socialization, the difference in status between the child and the adult shares importance with the *content* of the exchange in molding the outcome of the interaction. While recent reviews into "cultural problems" at the Academy have quite rightly focussed on corrosive behavioral norms in an effort to reduce instances of abuse and mistreatment,⁴⁰ these investigations rarely place central focus on the foundational input to these behavioral norms—the Academy military identity. The hypothesis of this analysis is that the process and content central to the construction of identity at the Academy enshrines an ideal that serves to exclude members who do not fit the mold. It is therefore necessary to analyze the content of the messages that are imparted throughout a Cadets' training, in an effort to validate this hypothesis.

A very specific identity is presented to Cadets upon arrival at the Academy. As the bus containing the new appointees pulls away from their parents and supporters on arrival at the Academy, senior Cadets on the bus begin their induction through a withering tirade that aims to provide a "service [of] throwing the new kids off balance, stretching the wire so taut that it cracks open their personalities so that new ones take shape."⁴¹ The screaming of the senior Cadets is an introduction to the form of military identity that will become most familiar to the Cadets as their training progresses:

"I do want that initial shock of a deer in the headlights, of 'Whoa, I just got hit by a bus,' Mount [a senior Cadet] says later, then corrects himself. "Not a bus, a wave. If they can get over that shock and start following orders, listening and being receptive, then I've done my job, and we've done our job." None of that ambivalence is evident in the man who is shouting at the newcomers on the bus, however. "Your life starts all over right here," he yells. "Right now." [...] "It is our responsibility - no, it is our sole purpose - to bring out the warrior spirit," Mount says. "We will push you beyond your limits." Although the script echoes every basic-training movie that Hollywood has ever shoved their way, the Cadets seem shocked [...] As the bus pulls into the Cadet area, Mount warns any Cadets who are uncertain to fizzle out now. "If you decide to choose the path

⁴⁰ Office of the Inspector General of the Department of Defense, *Evaluation of Sexual Assault, Reprisal, and Related Leadership Challenges at the United States Air Force Academy*, Report no. IPO2004C003, 3 December 2004, <http://www.defense.gov/news/Dec2004/d20041207igsummary.pdf> (accessed 17 April 2004).

⁴¹ Schemo, *Skies to Conquer*, 17.

of mediocrity, do not insult me or my country,” he intones. “Do not get off the bus.” [...] One woman, spooked by the performance, drops out on the spot.⁴²

Although designed to appear spontaneous, the act is carefully choreographed. In fact, the training cadre rehearses much of the first day’s training the day before induction with the Academy staff substituting as the incoming class.⁴³ As Maj Gen Lengyel, (then Commandant of Cadets described), in relation to the 2014 induction: “It’s an opportunity for the cadre to practice their speeches and their corrections that they’re going to do with the basic Cadets.”⁴⁴ Thus, as an approved training technique, the cadre’s method designed to produce an overbearing presence to the new Cadets is introduced as an ideal.

The presented identity here invokes a dominant, masculine persona, typified by the “warrior” ideal, an analogy that appears frequently in US military discourse, both within and outside the armed forces. Indeed, the USAF Chief of Staff in 2007 invoked the warrior ideal as a platform for the introduction of the “Airman’s Creed” aimed at capturing “the essence of our warfighting ethos.”⁴⁵ The first lines of the creed reflect the warrior ideal: “I am an American Airman. I am a Warrior. I have answered my nation’s call.”⁴⁶ The creed closely resembles the text of the US Army Soldier’s creed, particularly in the opening lines, “I am an American Soldier, I am a Warrior and a member of a team.”⁴⁷ Of particular note is the usage of the masculine “Airman” to describe all members of the USAF, regardless of gender. The idea of the warrior here is indelibly linked to the heroic image discussed in chapter two that was shown to contrast with the managerial image typified in Moskos’ conceptualization of the military occupation.

The parallels with Army training continue through the Cadets’ induction. Basic Training consists of two discrete components, the first of which is conducted within the main accommodation and training areas of the Academy. In the second component, a field exercise, consists of a variety of activities, such as range shoots, initiative and prob-

⁴² Schemo, *Skies to Conquer*, 17-18.

⁴³ John Schroyer, “AFA Cadets Get to Scream at Generals,” *Colorado Springs Gazette*, 25 Jun 2014, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NRwOLwBIyQ0> (accessed 16 April 2015).

⁴⁴ Schroyer, “AFA Cadets Get to Scream at Generals”.

⁴⁵ General T. Michael Moseley, “CSAF Presents Airman’s Creed”, 25 April 2007, <http://www.seymourjohnson.af.mil/news/story.asp?id=123050352> (accessed 4 April 2015).

⁴⁶ Moseley, “CSAF Presents Airman’s Creed”.

⁴⁷ United States Army, “Army Values: Soldier’s Creed”, <http://www.army.mil/values/soldiers.html> (accessed 16 April 2015).

lem-solving exercises, and military focussed training such as “small-unit manoeuvres and hostage rescue techniques.”⁴⁸ Marching or running in formed bodies prompts the singing of “jodies” or “military cadences originating with the U.S. Army.”⁴⁹ As a former Cadet observes: “we sang about wanting to be Army Airborne Rangers, signing up for Vietnam at the Army recruiting office downtown, and of course all kinds of would-be carnal knowledge about each other’s moms, girlfriends or both.”⁵⁰ Thus in the early stages of an Academy Cadet’s service career, much of the training is designed to resemble Army basic training. This is not, in itself, a major problem. Field training of this type can be a useful method of team building and serve to push the comfort boundaries of Cadets. However at the Academy, there is an interesting tension between the deployment of Army-style training in support of team building and pushing boundaries, and Army-style training used to “beat” the Cadets in order to toughen them up.⁵¹ The existence of this tension notwithstanding, the training method mobilized during basic training presents an ideal military identity that is closer to a hyper-masculine stylized Army warrior, then a 21st century Air Force Officer. This is clearly typified in the manner in which “corrections” are made, despite leadership style within the broader Air Force having developed considerably to the extent that screaming in the face of subordinates in order to correct them is no longer considered a valid technique. Thus, from the moment they arrive at the Academy, Cadets are presented with a stylized ideal identity that seems drawn from an Army template. More significantly, this is an identity that is not embraced in the broader Air Force.

Physical fitness is also highly valued as a component of the Academy identity. Physical conditioning is a core activity during basic training, and the emphasis on physical fitness continues throughout a Cadet’s time at the Academy. A popular technique in basic training is the “beat-down,” “a time when cadre—amateur drill instructors made up of the Academy upperclasses—subjected basic Cadets to strenuous physical activity

⁴⁸ David W. Graney, *Rogue Institution : Vigilante Injustice, Lawlessness, and Disorder at the Air Force Academy*, 1st ed. (Tucson, AZ: Wheatmark, 2010), 13.

⁴⁹ Graney, *Rogue Institution*, 10.

⁵⁰ Graney, *Rogue Institution*, 10.

⁵¹ Graney, *Rogue Institution*, 9. Male sophomore Cadet, Focus Group with Air Force Academy Cadets, 24 February 2015.

while imparting mostly inconsequential Air Force knowledge.”⁵² After basic training is complete, the emphasis placed on athletics continues through Cadet participation in intramural or inter-collegiate sport. Another example of the emphasis placed on athletic success is reflected in the salary paid to the Academy’s football coach, who earns close to \$1 million a year. In comparison, the Academy Superintendent, who holds the responsibility for the Academy as a whole, encompassing the athletic department, earns \$184,770.⁵³ Thus, the ideal Academy Cadet is also physically fit and athletically skilled.

There also appears to be a spiritual aspect to the ideal Academy identity, which is unsurprising, as religion is a prominent feature of American life. It permeates politics, sport, and education; and this trend is apparent at the Academy. This is visually encapsulated on arrival at the Academy—the Academy Chapel is the most prominent building on the campus and dominates the skyline through a combination of striking architecture and geographical placement. The physical presence of the chapel has a parallel in the prominence of spirituality in the lives of many Cadets. As the quantitative data indicates, the dominant religious affiliation in the USAF is Christianity, however accommodation is made for the small numbers of Cadets who are professed adherents of other faiths.⁵⁴ A recent scandal suggests that these accommodations may not, however, permeate to the level of identity.

On 10 March 2014, a member of Cadet Squadron 21 wrote a Bible verse on a whiteboard in a public area within the accommodation area of the Academy. Thirty-three people (29 Cadets and 4 Staff members) made a complaint to the Military Religious Freedom Foundation, a group that was formed to ensure “that all members of the United States Armed Forces fully receive the Constitutional guarantees of religious freedom to which they and all Americans are entitled by virtue of the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment.”⁵⁵ While the Cadet who had posted it subsequently removed the verse, this act prompted a flurry of further postings of verses drawn primarily from the Bible, but also from the Quran and other religious texts. This episode underscores an unresolved

⁵² Graney, *Rogue Institution*, 9.

⁵³ Tom Roeder, “Broken Code: AFA Superintendent Calls for Investigation of Athletic Transgressions”, *The Gazette*, <http://gazette.com/broken-code-afa-superintendent-calls-for-investigation-of-athletic-transgressions/article/1534978> (accessed 8 April 2015).

⁵⁴ Military Association of Atheists and Freethinkers, “Military Religious Demographics”.

⁵⁵ Military Religious Freedom Foundation, “Our Mission,” <http://www.militaryreligiousfreedom.org/about/our-mission/> (accessed 16 April 2015).

tension between the military's role as an impartial agent of the Government, which is bound by the First Amendment to refrain from making "no law respecting the establishment of religion," and its duty to facilitate the free exercising of members' beliefs.⁵⁶ The so-called "whiteboard incident" represents the most recent of a string of events at the Academy that have highlighted the uneasy relationship between religion and the military.⁵⁷ Janet Schemo, who spent a year at the Academy following the progress of Cadets in their first year, suggests that a clear preference for Christianity exists in the institution:

Brigadier General Johnny Weida, the former commandant of Cadets [...] famously taught Cadets a call-and-response system designed to prompt proselytising [...] Although the primacy of Christianity is not as open or forceful as it was under Weida's watch, it has hardly disappeared. [...] An atmosphere persists that presumes the primacy of Christianity, while merely tolerating - or sometimes accommodating - other religious beliefs. On more days than not each week, the academy offers some kind of option aimed at drawing Cadets to the cross. [...] [There is] a ban on any training or events considered "mission essential" on Sunday morning. That time is set aside for worship, and is never compromised. Cadets of other faiths, however, must choose between religious and military obligation. Jewish Cadets and Seventh Day Adventists miss important training events and Saturday morning inspections if they opt to observe the Sabbath and their religious holidays. In fact, there are no Jewish services at the Cadet chapel on Saturday morning. Believing Christians can live in harmony - even flourish and grow - in their religion at the academy, but this claim cannot be made by Cadets of other faiths. One recent graduate, who is Jewish, recalls obtaining special permission as a doolie [fourth class Cadet] to attend Saturday morning religious services off base. The first time went fine. But the second time she turned out in service dress on Saturday morning, her training commander shot her a look. He was about to start training four-digs, all of whom were in battle dress uniform. "You know why your classmates are all in the hallway?" he demanded.

Through more easily facilitating the observance of one religion over others, the Academy tacitly positions Christianity as the baseline religion for Cadets. While efforts to reduce the amount of proselytising have worked to reduce the overt preference for Christianity, the fact remains that any structure that makes it easier—or conversely, more difficult—for Cadets to practice their religion suggests that a "standard" spiritual identity

⁵⁶ United States National Archives, *Bill of Rights: Amendment I*, http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/charters/bill_of_rights_transcript.html (accessed 16 April 2015).

⁵⁷ Female senior Cadet, Focus Group with Air Force Academy Cadets, 24 February 2015.

exists, and while those who diverge might be tolerated, they clearly do not fit the mold. Thus, in addition to the hyper-masculine warrior ideal, the ideal academy Cadet is also Christian.

We will now mobilize Goffman's theory of presentation outlined in *The Presentation of Self*, in an effort to explore how this hyper-masculine, athletic, and predominantly Christian identity is a significant input in Cadets' primary socialization during basic training.

The Presentation of an Ideal Identity

Having established some of the content of the identity that is presented to Cadets in the process of basic training at the Academy, it will be useful to examine the mechanics of how this ideal identity is promulgated. In the earlier discussion of Goffman's theory of presentation, his concept of the dramaturgical was shown to permeate the mechanisms through which shared knowledge is imparted. For Goffman, all social interaction resembles a drama, in which participants sought to influence the current, and future, exchange through the act of giving impressions, and of having impressions given off. As Moya Lloyd observes, "for Goffman, identities derive from the performance of socially approved roles."⁵⁸ As highlighted in the previous section, the process of Basic Training at the Academy is particularly dramaturgical. In many ways, the senior Cadets are presenting an "extreme" identity to achieve a certain goal. This is often described by Cadets as "playing the game," and the extent to which it contributes to the development of a Cadet is the subject of much dissent. David W. Graney, a disgruntled former Cadet forced out of the Academy in his second year describes his view of the worth of "the game": "I had been told on more than one occasion that the first year at the Academy was a game and that a person must simply play the game to survive. I refused to play the game, as I hadn't gone to the Academy to play games. I went to the Academy to prepare for a professional career as an active-duty military officer. [...] Nothing about the Academy experience had ever been a game. Every action my classmates and I carried out had real-time, real-life consequences that reverberated well into the near and distant future."⁵⁹

⁵⁸ Moya Lloyd, *Judith Butler : From Norms to Politics* (Cambridge, UK : Polity Press, 2007), 58.

⁵⁹ Graney, *Rogue Institution*, 145-146.

Viewed through Goffman's theory of presentation, Graney's comments overlook a broader perspective, which is that *all* social interactions are acted out in the form of a game, with individuals attempting to manipulate the outcome through the presentation of specific roles. To Graney, a situation fails to constitute a game if there are "real-time, real-life consequences," but this perspective assumes the existence of a social template, against which one might juxtapose "serious" and "game-like" social situations.⁶⁰ Goffman, however, contends that all social interaction is played out as a game in the sense that roles are acted out and impressions given and given off.

If we are to view social life in such a way, it seems more reasonable to suggest that rather than refusing to play the game, Graney decided not to play the game according to the rules that had been presented to him. Viewed in this way, it is the *content* of the presentation that becomes the primary cause for concern, because the content of a message plays a significant role in influencing the way it is delivered and the rules that apply to its method of conveyance. To illustrate this point, we might consider the case of military action in support of a state's foreign policy objectives. If we assume that the state is a nuclear power, the range of available punitive actions encompasses a broad spectrum. Clearly, the relative importance of a message influences the selection of a response, which explains why an unrestrained nuclear conflict has not (yet) occurred. To bring the analogy back to our consideration of the dramaturgical element of basic training at the Academy, it seems reasonable to suggest that the *content* of the message influences the selection of roles that the senior Cadets employ to pass on this message. Unfortunately, the content of the message has not been closely examined to assess its appropriateness within a military that is socially very different from that of even 10 years ago. This may help to explain why enacting cultural change within the military—and in Academies in particular—proves to be so problematic. Goffman's theory suggests that we should concern ourselves with critically examining the data that is passed on to Cadets through the roles that are presented in basic training. He further intimates that by doing so we can build a better understanding of the types of impressions that are given off, as these provide a powerful template against which the boundaries of acceptable behavioral norms are developed. This idea will be explored in the next section.

⁶⁰ Graney, *Rogue Institution*, 146.

The Effect of Performing an Ideal Identity

In Chapter Three, Judith Butler's theory of performativity was introduced. The theory suggests that an identity—Butler deploys the theory with reference to gender—is not only constructed through a “stylized repetition of acts,” but reinforced in the same manner with the strategic purpose of keeping the identity “within its binary frame.”⁶¹ Applying this theory in the context of the Academy may help contribute to an explanation of the enduring nature of certain types of identity in the Air Force, but more importantly, uncover some reasons why unacceptable behavior continues to exist within the Academy despite the enacting of significant initiatives aimed at creating cultural change.

In the previous section, I suggested that the presentation of certain idealised roles at the Academy, particularly during basic training, contribute to the construction of an identity that resonates with these roles. In short, the internalization of these roles during the primary socialization that occurs in Basic Training aids in the construction of a “legitimizing identity,” which Castells describes as one that is “introduced by the dominant institutions of society to extend and rationalise their domination.”⁶² But the question of how this ideal or legitimizing identity is able to endure remains.

Supporters of a diverse military generally agree that establishing a military that is representative of society is a worthy goal.⁶³ But there is less consensus on how to achieve a diverse force. Many initiatives look to boosting the numbers of minority members in the organization through a variety of measures, such as affirmative action—often described as “positive discrimination”—or targeted recruitment policies.⁶⁴ However, I argue that these strategies rest on the tenuous argument that simply boosting the numbers of minority members is enough to bring about cultural change. Judith Butler's theory is helpful in exploring some of the reasons why this may not be the most helpful route to achieving a diverse air force.

A key argument of this work is that the ideal identity that is created in the Academy is one that has the potential to create a culture of exclusion due to its specificity. By

⁶¹ Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble : Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, (New York, NY : Routledge, 2006), 179.

⁶² Manuel Castells, *The Power of Identity*, (Malden, MA : Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 8.

⁶³ United States Air Force, *Diversity Strategic Roadmap*, 5; Australian Human Rights Commission, *Review into the Treatment of Women in the Australian Defence Force*, (Sydney: Australian Human Rights Commission, 2012), 109.

⁶⁴ Australian Human Rights Commission, *Review into the Treatment of Women*, 22.

idealizing the hyper-masculine, male Christian warrior, the tacit message being conveyed suggests that those who do not fit the mold are not central members of the team. But in addition to his concept of the “legitimizing identity,” Castells also posited the existence of a “resistance identity” that is taken on by those who are unable or unwilling to adopt the legitimizing identity. It seems reasonable to assume that those who do not fit the ideal Academy identity would adopt a resistance identity and over time this might erode the dominance of the legitimizing identity. Furthermore, this should also lead to the increased diversification of the Cadet ranks. However, a glance at the statistical representation of women in the Academy indicates little change since they were first admitted in 1975. For instance, on entry, females made up 12% of the class of 1982, and 19% of the class of 2008. A look at the raw numbers makes this number even less impressive. Given the reduced intake of Cadets in 2008 compared with 1982, the 7% increase represents only an additional 68 females in a class size of 1319 Cadets.

Performing the Academy Identity

In *Gender Trouble*, Judith Butler outlines a theory of gender that rests on the concept of the performative. Although this appears similar to Goffman’s theory of presentation, there are significant differences. In *Bodies that Matter*, Butler expands on the concept by declaring that performativity “is not primarily theatrical. [...] Its theatricality gains a certain inevitability given the impossibility of a full disclosure of its historicity.”⁶⁵ A concrete example here may assist. Moya Lloyd advances the example of a baby. A baby is “assigned” a gender before it has a chance to understand the social implications of particular gender roles. This may happen at birth or even *in utero*, but the outcome is the same - although the baby is not yet in a position to act out its gender in a theatrical sense, the linguistic process of performativity has begun, as the parents and significant others interact with her within the gendered social boundaries.⁶⁶

The performative nature of female participation is evident in much of the discourse surrounding the experience of women at military academies. In her study of female pilots in the Australian Defence Force, Deanne Gibbon conducted qualitative research that indicated a strategy employed by some female aviators is to “perform” the

⁶⁵ Judith Butler, *Bodies That Matter : On the Discursive Limits of "Sex"*, Routledge Classics (Abingdon, Oxon ; New York, NY: Routledge, 2011), xxi.

⁶⁶ Lloyd, *Judith Butler*, 48.

stereotypical gender role: “Yeah. I was one of the boys...I didn’t have a bad relationship with any of the guys. And I ended up being, one of the guys at my pilots’ course, his best man at his wedding.”⁶⁷

In some elements of the military, becoming “one of the boys” is necessary for females to gain acceptance and be viewed as worthy of respect. A common example can be seen in the debate as to whether physical standards should be modified, or to use the more common term “lowered,” to facilitate female participation. This view evident in focus groups conducted at the USAF Academy: “physical standards [...] even for flying and g tolerances and things like that, are designed to keep people alive in situations that have been experienced. I think you can’t adjust that, just to make someone happy, or to make it so that someone else can join. It’s just like saying, ‘well then let’s just allow people who don’t have arms to be infantrymen,’ you can’t do the job, but should we adjust the rules so that this group of people can do something that they’re not physically able to do the job as well?”⁶⁸

As this comment indicates, the male norm permeates the identity of the Academy to the extent that most women are forced to perform or replicate a certain set of masculine traits before being deemed suitable to “do the job.” But as suggested in Chapter Two, this attitude assumes the relevance and accuracy of extant physical requirements that have developed over many years of male-only participation.

“Divergent” representations of gender are not the only type of difference that can demand a performative correction in the military. As outlined above, the Academy has been the subject of criticism in recent years in relation to an apparent religious preference toward Protestant Christianity. In 2004, the Academy football team’s head coach Fisher DeBerry hung a banner in the locker room that read: “I am a Christian first and last. I am created in the likeness of God Almighty to bring Him glory. I am a member of Team Jesus Christ. I wear the colors of the cross.”⁶⁹ Data gathered during the focus groups indicated that significant steps have been taken toward reducing the impression that Christi-

⁶⁷ Deanne Gibbon, “Unexpected Turbulence : The Cultural, Gender-Based Challenges Facing Female Pilots in the Australian Defence Force,” in *Absent Aviators : Gender Issues in Aviation*, ed. Jane Neal-Smith, Donna Bridges, Albert J. Mills, (Surrey, UK : Ashgate, 2014), 124.

⁶⁸ Male sophomore Cadet, Focus Group with Air Force Academy Cadets, 24 February 2015.

⁶⁹ Michael L. Weinstein and Davin Seay, *With God on Our Side : One Man's War against an Evangelical Coup in America's Military* (New York, NY: Thomas Dunne Books, 2006), 62.

anity forms an integral part of an ideal Academy identity: “I view that religious acceptance is one thing that the Air Force Academy specifically teaches Cadets from day one. You know...we can’t allow our religious beliefs to get in the way of our unit cohesion. I feel like that normally isn’t a problem.”⁷⁰

However a structural barrier still remains in the fact that while Sundays remain privileged and set aside for attendance at Christian services, adherents of minority religions that do not traditionally meet on a Sunday, such as Muslim or Jewish faiths, must request permission to be absent from the training schedule; increasing the visibility of their difference, and, as evident in the case of the Jewish Cadet highlighted above, possibly discouraging individuals from observing their faith.

Butler’s theory of performativity therefore provides a useful way of unpacking the complex manner in which ideal identities are generated and replicated at the Academy. Performativity has a strategic aim of perpetuating the dominance of an ideal identity within a broader social structure, and at the Academy, this ideal identity is ostensibly male, hyper-masculine, athletic and Christian—the identity that is introduced by upper-class members on the first day of a Cadets’ life. Given the absence of a flourishing “resistance” identity, I suggest that this dominant identity remains in place due to it being performed not only by those who neatly fit the identity’s description, but also through its stylized replication by females and other visibly divergent groups. This is clearly evident in video footage of female senior class members inducting basic Cadets, in which females assume the hyper-masculine identity by screaming at close proximity to the faces of the inductees in an identical manner to their male counterparts.⁷¹ This evidence would suggest a dual role of performativity—it both reinforces the dominant identity, while also providing a manner through which members of the out-group can gain entrance to the in-group.

The Performed Identity and Symbolic Interactionism

Through performance, the ideal identity becomes a shared knowledge, or symbol that is mobilized in the context of social interactions between Cadets. This resonates with the theoretical framework of symbolic interactionism, in which common symbols, in this

⁷⁰ Male sophomore Cadet, Focus Group with Air Force Academy Cadets, 24 February 2015.

⁷¹ Schroyer, “AFA Cadets Get to Scream at Generals”.

case an ideal identity, are used to assign roles and positions within a given social construct. As will be discussed in the next section, a Cadet's ability to replicate the ideal identity affects the role he or she is assigned in the Academy. As is evident in basic training, the more authentic a performance, the more respect and esteem is afforded to a Cadet or group of Cadets. This is evident in the type of insults that are afforded to Cadets who are performing poorly: "We've got females who are already outside... That's pathetic."⁷² Here the common symbol of an ideal identity—*not* a female—is used to encourage male Cadets to perform to a higher standard.

The Limits of Performativity

Unfortunately, even if minority members prove themselves physically and mentally worthy of inclusion in the in-group, this is often only the first hurdle: "we had a Marine special operator who came a few weeks ago, and he was saying on all those missions, that he sees a female as, like, someone's daughter and, like, his responsibility to protect her, and so it's almost like we're putting them up on a pedestal, so, um, trying to protect them, and not really seeing them as just another one of the guys who can carry out the mission, yes they're capable of it, but the question comes down to whether or not we *should* try to integrate them."⁷³

The example of multiple barriers to minority acceptance is not limited to gender. Other characteristics can be viewed as problematic in a military context if an individual is unable or unwilling to fully conform to the dominant identity norm: "[F]rom an operational point of view. Just say this guy is a Muslim and he wears whatever it is they wear, and um, there's a guy in the bush and he's the Taliban or whatever, and he's got his sights on two guys, which one would he pick? I guarantee he wouldn't pick the one who's got the Muslim thing on his head."⁷⁴

Henri Tajfel and John Turner would suggest that this evidence of performativity having limitations is unsurprising. As outlined in Chapter Two, their research suggests that perceptible difference was not always a discriminating factor when it came to developing a sense of belonging. In their experiments, the mere *act* of belonging was enough

⁷² Schemo, *Skies to Conquer*, 65.

⁷³ Male sophomore Cadet, Focus Group with Air Force Academy Cadets, 24 February 2015.

⁷⁴ Comments by a RAAF member, drawn from an interview conducted during research for an unpublished Master's Thesis by the author, *Religious Diversity in the Australian Defence Force: Towards a Representative Military*, 2010.

to install a sense of “in-group favouritism and discrimination against the out group.”⁷⁵ Attempts by the members of one group to seek acceptance in the other through performatively “taking on” the characteristics of the rival group would presumably have failed because the shared understanding that outsiders simply “didn’t belong”—by virtue of their membership of another group—would presumably have stymied these efforts. Of course the complication in the Academy example lies in the fact that it is perceptible difference that forms an awareness of who constitutes the in-group. Thus a simple re-casting of the membership, through a targeted bolstering of minority numbers without addressing the problematic ideal identity, is unlikely to achieve lasting change. In this sense, the Academy does not resemble a minimal group, because visible characteristics such as gender and religion cause juxtaposition with an ideal identity.

Those exhibiting a perceptible difference therefore experience a double bind—even if they succeed in overturning certain structural barriers in order to gain entry to the peripheral of the in-group, additional obstructions appear that limit the possibility of entry. This is starkly evident in the experience of individuals who represent more than one “divergent” trait, such as this African-American female Cadet: “They made fun of me because of cultural differences, and they were just like, ‘well I don’t think that, you know, women should be in the military because of blah’ and I was like, well that happened, like, 30 years ago. Or they’ll be like, ‘you know...I think the only reason why black people are here is because it’s more of a pity thing and not because you guys actually got here on your own merit.’ So they’re like, ‘yeah, you’ve got the double threat, it’s like, you were black and you were female, and that’s how you got in here.’ And I was like, no; I worked my butt off to get here. But, I mean, you still see it *a lot*.”⁷⁶

Alternatively, when possible for some individuals, the sacrificial casting-off of certain traits, such as femininity, in order to more closely resemble the ideal has the opposite effect, creating an appearance of inauthenticity that also presents a barrier: “A lot of the Cadet male population are like, ‘Cadet girls...they’re not girls’, or ‘they’re not

⁷⁵ Henri Tajfel and John Turner, “An Integrative Theory of Intergroup Conflict,” in *Organizational Identity: A Reader*, ed. Mary Jo Hatch and Majken Schultz (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2004), 57.

⁷⁶ Female senior Cadet, Focus Group with Air Force Academy Cadets, 24 February 2015.

feminine' and so its kind of hard to maintain your femininity I think, and still be in uniform.”⁷⁷

Here the ideal Cadet identity appears to stymie female inclusion regardless of their actions. If a female chooses to act in a feminine manner, she is treated accordingly. As one male Cadet observed: “I just put them on a higher pedestal and I do things differently for them, because they’re a woman and I’m a guy.”⁷⁸ However, if the female chooses to more closely perform the ideal identity, she becomes inauthentic. Put simply, there are limits to the ability of a minority member to appropriately perform the dominant identity, which serves to reinforce its hegemonic status.

Why Should the Academy Care About Diversity?

This chapter has analysed quantitative and qualitative data pertaining to the Academy through the lens of a number of theoretical frameworks in order to build a deeper understanding of the power of identity in both establishing in-groups and out-groups, as well as setting the foundation for certain behavioral norms that serve to reinforce the projection of an ideal military identity.

For some the analysis conducted in this thesis might provide little in the way of useful information. A common argument deployed in support of the *status quo* mobilizes the instrumental success of the United States Air Force in achieving its mandated mission, “to fly, fight and win...in air, space and cyberspace.”⁷⁹ Indeed, in terms of professional competency and technological development, the US Air Force is without peer, and some would argue that any benefits derived from the cultural change necessary to build an inclusive workforce would be negligible. Moreover, critics argue that diversifying the military will necessarily lead to *decreased* combat effectiveness due to lowered standards and decreased morale due to fractured unit cohesiveness.⁸⁰ Such critics view any act that reduces the instrumental effectiveness of the Air Force as undesirable.

Here, the findings of the Senate Select Committee on CIA Detention and Interrogation Program (SSCI) are instructive. The report acknowledges the impact of the attacks of 11 September 2001 on strengthening the resolve and instrumental capabilities of

⁷⁷ Female sophomore Cadet, Focus Group with Air Force Academy Cadets, 24 February 2015.

⁷⁸ Male sophomore Cadet, Focus Group with Air Force Academy Cadets, 24 February 2015.

⁷⁹ United States Air Force, “Our Mission”, <http://www.airforce.com/learn-about/our-mission/>, (accessed 28 January 2015).

⁸⁰ Maginnis, *Deadly Consequences*, 100.

America's Intelligence community in order to prevent a similar attack. However, the report concludes: "Nevertheless, such pressure, fear, and expectation of further terrorist plots do not justify, temper, or excuse improper actions taken by individuals or organisations in the name of national security. The major lesson of this report is that regardless of the pressures and the need to act, the Intelligence Community's actions must always reflect who we are as a nation, and adhere to our laws and standards. It is precisely at these times of national crisis that our government must be guided by the lessons of our history and subject decision to internal and external review."⁸¹

As this excerpt suggests, within a Western liberal polity, instrumentality must be balanced with and tempered by the values espoused by a nation. This means that despite strident rhetoric to the contrary, a state's identity is equally reflected in the *limits* it places on the instrumentality of its coercive institutions, as much as the instrumental effectiveness they provide.⁸² Put another way, the credibility of a democratic government rests on the authenticity with which it embraces the liberal democratic principle of full engagement of *all* citizens in the effective operation of the state. Indeed, as Michael Freeden observes, the government holds the ultimate responsibility for ensuring that its citizens are afforded the rights associated with full engagement in the operation of the state: "the political system is the institution entrusted with resolving, or ideologically decontesting [...] areas of rights-conflict."⁸³

If rights are understood, as Freeden suggests, as "linked to concepts such as liberty, equality or individuality," it is not too great a stretch to view equal participation in the defense of a nation as a right.⁸⁴ Indeed, as famously encapsulated in the words of the United States Declaration of Independence: "all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liber-

⁸¹ Dianne Feinstein, "Foreword," in Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, *Senate Select Committee on Intelligence: Committee Study of the Central Intelligence Agency's Detention and Interrogation Program*, 2.

⁸² Irin Carmon, "Dick Cheney on Torture: I Would Do it Again in a Minute," *msnbc*, 14 December 2014, <http://www.msnbc.com/msnbc/dick-cheney-torture-i-would-do-it-again-minute> (accessed 17 April 2015); Eric Lewis, "Torture's Future," *New York Times*, 21 November 2011, <http://campaignstops.blogs.nytimes.com/2011/11/21/tortures-future/> (accessed 17 April 2015).

⁸³ Michael Freeden, *Rights* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1991), 110.

⁸⁴ Freeden, *Rights*, 2.

ty and the pursuit of Happiness.”⁸⁵ Many rights theorists draw a distinction between positive and negative rights; positive rights being those that are enabled by action, while negative rights are realized by the absence of action. Viewed through the lens of rights, a diverse military is a necessity in a liberal democracy; and the gradual removal of legislative barriers barring military service to certain sections of the community is evidence of the recognition of this fact. However the quantitative data presented in this chapter suggests that merely removing legislative barriers is not sufficient to diversify the organization in a manner that would make the Air Force reflective of society. This would suggest that the right to equal participation in the US military constitutes a positive right, and therefore requires action to bring it about. Put simply, due to the well-established cultural norms and behaviors that have become part of the fabric of the US Air Force Academy since the first class was admitted in 1955, this is not a problem that will resolve itself through the removal of legal barriers.

Instrumental Benefits of Diversity

As I argue in Chapter One, there is extensive literature to support the fact that diverse groups generally perform to a higher standard than those that are homogenous. I do not intend to follow this line of argument, since despite the extensive, and growing, body of literature, there is still significant opposition to diversifying the military, as evident in the strident arguments opposing female participation in combat.⁸⁶ This suggests that instrumental arguments are ineffective in convincing some of the benefits of diversity. Thus, instead of focusing on what the military would instrumentally achieve from a diverse force, the following analysis will seek to uncover legal and normative reasons for change.

Legitimacy

Chapter Three presents Max Weber’s concept of legitimacy as being partially dependent on how effectively an organization could be seen as “worthy of imitation.”⁸⁷ This has clear relevance to the present discussion of how far instrumentality should dictate the

⁸⁵ United States National Archives, *Declaration of Independence*, http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/charters/declaration_transcript.html (accessed 17 April 2015).

⁸⁶ Maginnis, *Deadly Consequences*; Greg Sheriden, “Women Have No Place in Combat”, *The Australian*, 29 November 2011, <http://www.theaustralian.com.au/national-affairs/opinion/women-have-no-place-in-combat/story-e6frgd0x-1226149860334>, (accessed 8 December 2014).

⁸⁷ Max Weber, *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization*, trans., A. Henderson & T. Parsons (New York, NY : The Free Press of Glencoe, 1947), 130.

operation of the military. As highlighted in the excerpt from the Senate Select Committee above, a tension exists between instrumentality and the rule of law. As became evident in the CIA's employment of coercive interrogation techniques, there are boundaries and thresholds that should constrain the activities of government in a liberal democracy. A related concept can be found in customary International Humanitarian Law, where the tenet of "proportionality" limits the excessive use of force.⁸⁸ Clearly, in military situations, a massively disproportionate use of force would often be the most logical course of action from an instrumental point of view, since the absolute destruction of an enemy's ability to continue to fight would be a favourable outcome. But as the law of proportionality suggests, there can be very good reasons to limit one's instrumental effectiveness.

We can see, then, that there is significant precedent for limiting the instrumental effectiveness of a military organization, which serves to weaken the argument of critics who lament an inevitable reduction in the capability of a diverse military due to the "dilution" of standards.⁸⁹ This precedent notwithstanding, criticism on the basis of reduced effectiveness also suffers from a lack of evidence. Given the fact that integration of females into combat positions is a relatively new phenomenon, there is a scarcity of data relating to its effects, but based on the experience of the integration of African-Americans, it is possible that the benefits of a diverse workforce will outweigh any negative outcomes. The lessons of racial integration in the US military are instructive, as they provide evidence to debunk arguments of essential characteristics that are broadly applicable to particular demographics.

To bring the discussion back to Weber's argument, I suggest that the US Air Force would gain legitimacy by being "worthy of imitation."⁹⁰ This would entail the Air Force constituting an organization that is seen as inclusive both within and outside the institution. An institution enjoying high levels of legitimacy with those outside the organization would likely see greater community engagement from ostensibly minority groups, such as women and religious minorities, in the form of increased recruitment. Additionally, an organization viewed as broadly legitimate from within is likely to retain, and by

⁸⁸ International Committee of the Red Cross, "Customary International Humanitarian Law: Rule 14. Proportionality in Attack," https://www.icrc.org/customary-ihl/eng/docs/v1_cha_chapter4_rule14 (accessed 17 April 2015).

⁸⁹ Maginnis, *Deadly Consequences*, 100.

⁹⁰ Weber, *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization*, 130.

extension grow the number of, members of minority groups, thereby building a population that moves closer to a reflection of broader society. Thus from the perspective of recruitment and retention, legitimacy is important, and this chapter will now unpack this concept in the context of representation.

Representation as a Legitimater

Philosophically, as an institution “representative” of the US Government—in Pitkin’s sense of “making present” something that is not, or cannot be present—the Air Force constitutes a *de facto* representation of it.⁹¹ In Chapter Three, it was suggested that the legitimacy of a military organization rested on how it was viewed as representing the entity it takes the place of. More specifically, I posit that an organization that exhibits a hybrid model made up of a variety of types of representation might enjoy greater legitimacy than one that can only be narrowly defined as representative.

In Chapter Three, some broad differences between Hobbes’ “Authorisation view” of representation and Pitkin’s “acting for” model were considered. It was suggested that Pitkin’s model introduced an important qualitative element to the concept. This is clearly present in the manner by which we judge the qualitative nature of military activities. For example, the public revulsion for the My Lai massacre indicates that the broader public evaluates the actions of a military organization. A contemporaneous letter to the *New York Times* concerning the massacre neatly encapsulates this: “The burden of guilt that lies upon us, and America, will not easily be expiated, but the first step lies immediately at hand. We must get out of Vietnam. Now.”⁹² Here, the author’s language points to the understanding of the military’s actions as representative both within the nation (“us”) and internationally (“America”). His apportionment of blame to broader America underscores the suggestion that the military fits within the definition of an “acting for” model of representation. This is one element that contributes to the overall hybrid model of military representation, and as this letter suggests, it is one of the more resilient in the sense that the Air Force will generally enjoy the status of an “acting for” representative as long as the organization remains legally constituted by the US government. That said, and as

⁹¹ Hannah Fenichel Pitkin, *The Concept of Representation*, (Berkeley, CA : University of California Press, 1967), 92.

⁹² Morton H. Fried, “Letter to the Editor of the Times: Songmy Massacre”, *New York Times*, 30 November 1969.

suggested by the “triangle of legitimacy” in Chapter Three, the legal basis of a military’s existence primarily contributes to the legitimacy of the Government/Military dyad.

There are other less resilient types of representation however, and one that is particularly relevant to this analysis is that of Pitkin’s concept of “descriptive representation.”⁹³ As suggested in chapter three, an organization exhibiting descriptive representation would be a mirror of society, or as John Adams phrased it, constitute “an exact portrait, in miniature, of the people at large.”⁹⁴ As the quantitative data presented in this thesis has shown, the Air Force Academy, and by extension, the US Air Force writ large, displays low levels of descriptive representation. Viewed through the lens of Weber’s theory, this has the potential to significantly affect the overall legitimacy of the Air Force, as it suggests the existence of barriers that limit the organisation’s engagement with certain segments of society. In the same way that representative democracy is viewed as an optimal method of legitimizing the conduct of government in Western liberal polities, a truly representative military would enjoy increased legitimacy, as it would be seen to embody the values of the *entire* country, rather than a relatively small cross-section.

The concept of *reflection* as a legitimator is therefore posited as a way to resolve the problematic Military/Society dyad in the triangle of legitimacy as shown in figure 2.

⁹³ Pitkin, *The Concept of Representation*, 61.

⁹⁴ John Adams and Charles Francis Adams, *The Works [of] John Adams, Second President of the United States*, vol. IV, (New York, NY : AMS Press, 1971), 205.

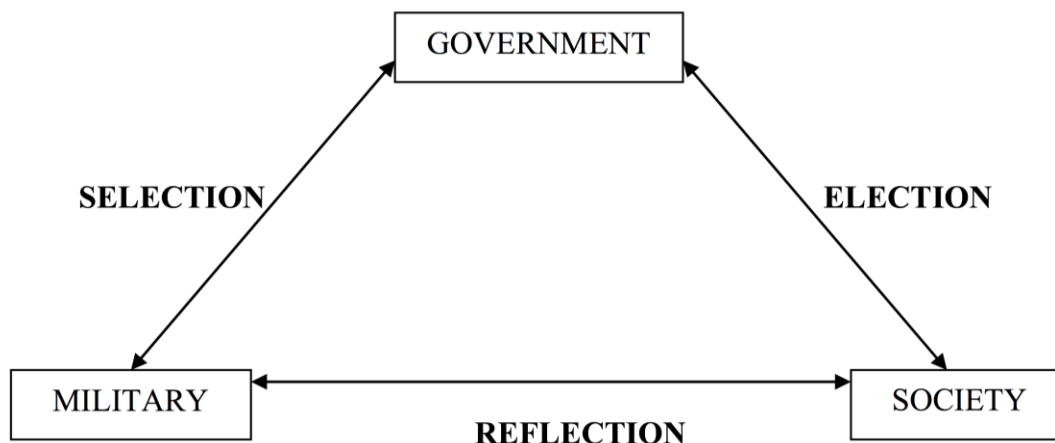


Figure 2 – An “Ideal” Triangle of Legitimacy

Source: Author’s unpublished Master’s Thesis “Religious Diversity in the Australian Defence Force: Towards a Representative Military.”

By reflecting the demographic of the broader United States, the Air Force Academy would be more likely to be seen as “worthy of imitation” because the inclusion of a broader cross-section of society would contribute to a greater sense of the Air Force representing the interests of all of society.⁹⁵ There is also a powerful instrumental motivator here. US Census data indicates that the demographic makeup of American society is changing and in particular, the historically prominent “white” section of society is decreasing. Census predictions suggest that by 2044, the “white population” will become a “majority minority,” representing 49.7% of the US citizenry, while Hispanics are projected to grow to represent 25.1% of the population.⁹⁶ The specific figures notwithstanding, the US population is diversifying; and, regardless of the accuracy of these 2044 projections, the fact that currently under-represented segments of the Air Force Academy’s de-

⁹⁵ Weber, *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization*, 130.

⁹⁶ William H. Frey, “New Projections Point to a Majority Minority Nation in 2044”, *Brookings*, 12 December 2014, http://www.brookings.edu/blogs/the-avenue/posts/2014/12/12-majority-minority-nation-2044-frey?utm_campaign=Brookings+Brief&utm_source=hs_email&utm_medium=email&utm_content=15281320&_hsenc=p2ANqtz-_qpt4RD--793M0n_ewCTTCDdvJIS4jif_Y0V2IXp1wesPjvJ9inK5IpVTcZUEp6USYvbg7pQ-KOTCzdB3pA4IGDTsjqMrLoV_x0OJRmZTPsHWkYsI&_hsmi=15281320 (accessed 12 April 2015).

mographic, such as Hispanics, are increasing in broader society should prompt a reconsideration of the *status quo*.

Conclusion

This chapter has introduced both quantitative and qualitative data in an effort to contextualize the analysis of identity construction at the US Air Force Academy. The quantitative data clearly indicates that the Academy is significantly under-represented by certain minority groups, particularly adherents of minority religions. More telling is the low level of female representation, which, despite extensive efforts to improve, is only slightly greater than the early days of female inclusion. Viewed through the lens of the rights discourse, this suggests that the provision of equal opportunity of attendance at the Academy constitutes a positive right—a right that confers an obligation for action to be realized.

This thesis argues that actions thus far in attempting to create an inclusive and diverse Academy have broadly failed due to a mis-direction of focus. While targeted recruitment programs might be effective in some instances, greater attention needs to be given to reassessing the method and content of identity construction at the Academy. In cultivating an exclusive and narrowly defined ideal identity, the Academy, and indeed the US Air Force, serves to limit the talent pool from which it can select its Cadets. American society is evolving, and the traditional perception of an Academy Cadet that is white, male, hyper-masculine, athletic and Christian will eventually become less relevant as representing the exemplary characteristics of the United States Air Force. Moreover, the experiential model of career progression in the military dictates that the diversity of the organization is greatly dependent on a diverse recruitment pool, as there is very little scope for entry into the officer career stream other than from the bottom, at the 2nd lieutenant rank level.

This chapter used the theories of Erving Goffman and Judith Butler in order to examine the dynamics of identity construction at the Academy. Goffman's theory of presentation was deployed to help explain how the basic training process resembled a second "primary socialisation" for new Cadets, through which the Cadets had occasion to "take on" the views of the "generalized other"—in the guise of senior Cadets—and

thereby construct new military identities.⁹⁷ As indicated by the list of Class Exemplars, and reinforced by the quantitative data, this ideal military identity has some discernible attributes; it is broadly white, male, hyper masculine, athletic and Christian. This “legitimizing” identity derives its enduring nature from the fact that it is repeatedly and subsequently performed by both those who fit within its boundaries, as well as those who do not, such as women.⁹⁸ The repetitive performance of the ideal identity discourages the creation of “resistance” or “project” identities and serves to cement its dominance and definitive nature. This is quite apart from the fact that some of the content of the identity, such as hyper masculine leadership that manifests itself by shouting and belittling subordinates in an overbearing manner to correct behaviour, is no longer deemed acceptable in the “real” Air Force.

Finally, this chapter considered some of the reasons why the Academy should reflect the demographic make up of American society. In doing so, a number of arguments against diversification were examined, with a conclusion being that while the military stands to realise some instrumental capability benefits by becoming a more diverse organization, the primary reason that the Academy should develop and cultivate an inclusive workforce is because it would help realise the inherent equal right of all US citizens to participate in the defense of the nation.

The next chapter will bring together the broader conclusions of this thesis, while also making some policy recommendations that will focus on identity as the key to diversification.

⁹⁷ Berger & Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality*, 135.; Berger & Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality*, 132.

⁹⁸ Castells, *The Power of Identity*, 8.

Chapter 5

Conclusions and Recommendations

This thesis has explored the challenge of demographic and global diversity faced by the US Air Force Academy and the US Air Force more generally. In particular, the analysis has focused on the role of identity construction in the development of behavioral norms that influence the culture within the Academy. Both quantitative and qualitative data have been presented, suggesting that the Academy's demographic is significantly divergent from that of broader US society. As outlined in previous chapters, this is an observation of little relevance to some. These critics focus on the instrumental effectiveness of the Air Force as the key indicator of a successful organization. This broadly reflects Samuel Huntington's thesis in *The Soldier and The State*, in which he argues for a military that is separated from society rather than an integral part of it.¹ However, the idea of a military that sits apart from society is becoming more anachronistic as modern society evolves. For instance, technology has evolved to such a point that US Air Force personnel routinely operate in far-flung areas of operations without leaving the vicinity of their home base in the US. Remotely Piloted Aircraft (RPA) operators can remotely control offensive air assets from the continental US and then return home to their families at the completion of the duty day. This highlights the fact that rather than resembling the model set out by Huntington, the military and modern society are becoming increasingly inter-linked.

This trend has been developing ever since the modern nation-state began to shun the engagement of *condotterie* to prosecute military campaigns and moved to assume the responsibility through the use of its own citizens. This made it necessary for the military to appeal to the citizenry in certain ways if it were to fill its ranks. Coercive methods such as press gangs notwithstanding, the fact remains today that the military must rely on the support of the citizenry to recruit its members. In a world characterized by high levels of mobility resulting in large-scale migration, the traditional demographic of many nation-states is changing. This is evident in the US, with projected census data, presented in

¹ Samuel P. Huntington, *The Soldier and the State : the Theory and Politics of Civil-Military Relations*, (Cambridge, MA : Bellknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1957).

Chapter Three, suggesting that the “white” proportion of the population will constitute a “majority minority” by 2044.² It should be clear that shifting demographic trends present a compelling case for appealing to a broad recruitment base, because the census data would suggest that relying on the recruitment of the currently dominant segment of the military—white males—would yield lower returns as that section of the community decreases relative to other groups.

There are other benefits to cultivating a diverse workforce. Studies have conclusively, and repeatedly, shown that diverse groups perform better than homogenous groups.³ As James Surowiecki points out: “Diversity helps because it actually adds perspectives that would otherwise be absent and because it takes away, or at least weakens, some of the destructive characteristics of group decision making.”⁴

A common criticism against diversity in the military rests on the assumption that obvious difference, such as sex, religion or ethnicity, somehow erodes the bonds of unit cohesion. This argument rests on the assumption that likeness is somehow critical to the formation of groups. However, Tajfel and Turner showed, through experiments with minimal groups, that tangible likeness was unnecessary for a group to bond. Moreover, as suggested in chapter two, there is also evidence to show that *too much* unit cohesion can result in reduced military effectiveness.

The military therefore stands to benefit greatly from the cultivation of a diverse force. A singular focus on these instrumental benefits is problematic however. Basing the argument for inclusivity solely on the potential benefits risks sidelining the argument, particularly in a resource-constrained environment where capabilities are subject to frequent cost-benefit analyses. The danger here is that diversity policy becomes one of a plethora of “number one” priorities, and subject to ranking against other deliverables.

² William H. Frey, “New Projections Point to a Majority Minority Nation in 2044”, *Brookings*, 12 December 2014, http://www.brookings.edu/blogs/the-avenue/posts/2014/12/12-majority-minority-nation-2044-frey?utm_campaign=Brookings+Brief&utm_source=hs_email&utm_medium=email&utm_content=15281320&_hsenc=p2ANqtz-_qpt4RD--793M0n_ewCTTCDDvJIS4jif_Y0V2lXp1wesPjvJ9inK5IpVTcZUEp6USYvbg7pQ-KOTCzdB3pA4IGDTsjqMrLoV_x0OJRmZTPsHWkYsl&_hsmi=15281320 (accessed 12 April 2015).

³ James Surowiecki, *The Wisdom of Crowds : Why the Many Are Smarter Than the Few and How Collective Wisdom Shapes Business, Economies, Societies, and Nations*, (New York, NY : Doubleday, 2004); Scott E. Page, *The Difference : How the Power of Diversity Creates Better Groups, Firms, Schools, and Societies*, (Princeton, NJ : Princeton University Press, 2007).

⁴ Surowiecki, *The Wisdom of Crowds*, 29.

As argued in the previous chapter, in the US it is imperative that the military inculcate an inclusive and reflective organization, because, as a government institution, it must reflect the liberal democratic ideals of the government it serves. As a representative of the Government, the US Air Force is obliged to do all it can to ensure that any barriers to equal participation within the organization are removed. The quantitative data relating to the historical trend of minority participation suggest that equal opportunity of participation is a *positive* right, and therefore the military must take active steps to realize this right. This conclusion is primarily drawn from the fact that despite numerous reviews into various aspects of Academy culture, the broad statistics relating to minority attendance at the Academy have failed to change significantly over the years.

To many, diversity in the military is a non-issue, or more disturbingly, a lamentable sign of the “political correctness” that is rife in today’s society.⁵ This thesis has argued against such a view by mobilizing a human rights argument to support the move to facilitate greater minority participation in the US Air Force. Put simply, the erection of barriers—either legal or normative—to minority participation based on the generalized attributes of any group is unacceptable in a liberal democracy that purports to support the individual pursuit of self-determination. The recent removal of barriers to female entry into combat roles is a step in the right direction, however, as this thesis has argued, the removal of legal barriers is only one, nominal step toward creating an inclusive and diverse workforce. A primary goal must be the reframing of the US Air Force identity so that it reflects the character of the rapidly diversifying US society.

In conclusion, I will present a number of policy observations that provide a broad summation of the main implications of this thesis. I believe these six areas provide a useful starting point to begin the necessary dialogue if the US Air Force Academy is to reframe its identity and move toward being a more inclusive and diverse organization.

Policy observation 1 - work is needed to build an inclusive force

As highlighted in Chapter Four, a comparison of the demographic of the Air Force Academy, as well as the broader Air Force, with US census data shows vast differences. In general, the Academy is more Christian, whiter and male than US society. In

⁵ Lieutenant General William G. “Jerry” Boykin, back cover endorsement for Robert L. Maginnis, *Deadly Consequences : How Cowards Are Pushing Women into Combat* (Washington D.C. : Regnery Publishing, 2013).

some ways this is unsurprising, particularly in an organization that has historically appealed to “the masculine advantages of mastery, dominance, and control” in recruitment campaigns.⁶ However, as exemplified in a recent joint memo from the Secretary of the Air Force and the Chief of Staff, United States Air Force, the US Air Force is committed “to diversity and inclusion and the maximizing of their benefits on behalf of our Service and Nation.”⁷ The extant levels of diversity in the organization suggest that there is much to be done, and the Secretary’s subsequent outlining of nine “Diversity & Inclusion Initiatives” demonstrate resolve and initiative in seeking solutions to the problem of homogeneity in the Air Force.⁸ None of these initiatives, however, explicitly seeks to arrest the pervasiveness of behavioral norms that fuel inappropriate behavior as has been evident in recent scandals at the Academy. While each of the initiatives is aimed at modifying the culture of the organization in order to enhance inclusivity, none highlight identity as a crucial ingredient in the development of behavioral norms within the Air Force.

This thesis argues that the cultural climate of an organization is largely dictated by the broader understanding of “who we are” as an organization. Given the oppositional nature of identity construction—that is, I primarily draw my certainty of identity from what I am not—the more narrowly an “ideal” identity is drawn, the less likely it is that the emerging behavioral norms will enable an inclusive environment. Thus the presentation of a particular ideal Academy identity of a male, white, hyper-masculine, athletic, Christian warrior from the start of a Cadet’s Academy experience encourages the subsequent performance of this identity by the new Cadets, even if they do not fit within the paradigm. This serves to nullify the benefits of diversity, since “divergent” Cadets are socialized to minimize the visibility of their difference. This has the effect of further reinforcing the dominant paradigm, given the powerful message conveyed by a member of a

⁶ Melissa T. Brown, *Enlisting Masculinity : The Construction of Gender in U.S. Military Recruiting Advertising During the All-Volunteer Force* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2012), 131.

⁷ Deborah Lee James, General Mark A. Welsh and Chief Master Sergeant James A. Cody, “Memorandum for all Airmen: Air Force Diversity & Inclusion,” 4 March 2015, http://www.af.mil/Portals/1/documents/SECAF/FINALDiversity_Inclusion_Memo1.pdf (accessed 17 April 2015).

⁸ Deborah Lee James, General Mark A. Welsh and Chief Master Sergeant James A. Cody, “Memorandum for all Airmen: 2015 Diversity & Inclusion (D&I) Initiatives,” 4 March 2015, http://www.af.mil/Portals/1/documents/SECAF/FINALDiversity_Inclusion_Memo2.pdf (accessed 17 April 2015).

minority group, such as a female, performing the dominant identity. This helps explain the failure of Castell's "resistance" and "project" identities to take root at the Academy.

RECOMMENDATION 1 - The Academy should consider a critical examination of the dominant Cadet identity in order to ascertain its relevance in producing future leaders in the US Air Force.

Policy observation 2 - The focus on Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) at the Academy reduces the number of minority members in the candidate pool

While the Air Force is arguably the most technical of the armed services, it is less certain that a degree in science is necessary to excel as an officer in the USAF. While there are clearly career paths that demand a graduate level education in the hard sciences, such as the Engineer career stream, there are a wide variety of employment streams that Academy graduates follow where this level of technical education is unnecessary. A number of Cadets expressed this view during the focus groups, including two females, one of whom was majoring in legal studies, and the other in management. It is possible that the emphasis on the hard sciences in the application process reduces the pool of available candidates by thinning the ranks of minority groups who traditionally score poorly in ACT and SAT mathematics and science sections. Additionally, the primacy of hard sciences in the core curriculum may also contribute to a decision not to apply to the Academy for members of these groups who may otherwise be interested in a career as an Air Force officer.

Although degree options were relatively limited in the early years, the Australian Defence Force Academy now offers a broad selection of degrees, encompassing humanities, science, technology and engineering; and Cadets are generally free to study the degree of their choice, depending on the career stream they have been recruited to follow. The target entry scores in the Australian equivalent to the ACT and SAT are degree specific, so a prospective Cadet wishing to study a degree in history would not need to demonstrate as high a proficiency in the hard sciences as another Cadet who wishes to study Electrical Engineering. This serves to lower the barrier to entry for individuals with varying levels of science and mathematics ability.

RECOMMENDATION 2 - The US Air Force Academy should grow the pool of applicants from minority groups—including women—by refocusing the curriculum away from primarily hard science and engineering in order to give Cadets the flexibility to study a degree other than the Bachelor of Science that is currently exclusively offered.

Policy observation 3 - **The identity that is presented to basic Cadets on arrival and during induction training is incongruous with that expected of Cadets when they graduate.**

Upon arrival at the Academy, Cadets are presented with a very particular identity. The choreographed nature of this identity is evident in the rehearsals that are held in the days prior in order to optimize the performance. The fact that the final of these rehearsals is conducted in front of the Academy staff, including the three-star Superintendent, lends credibility to the identity that is being performed.⁹ The cadre's method of "making corrections" largely resembles the archetypal Hollywood boot camp scenario, with overbearing seniors shouting in the faces of the inductees. The jarring nature of one's first day in the military, combined with the lack of contextual cues, means that the theatrical element of this training is lost on the new basic Cadets. For them, this identity *is* reality, and the clear expectation is that they are to emulate the example set by the senior class members.

While the methods employed in basic training at the Academy may have fit the social context of years gone by, the focus of basic training and the techniques employed to induct basic Cadets now reinforces an incongruent identity to that expected of Cadets following graduation. In *Concepts for Air Force Leadership*, a chapter by COL Henry W. Horton considers "Thirteen Traits of Effective Leaders."¹⁰ First on the list is "respect": "Leaders treat all human beings with respect and dignity, in all situations. Whether speaking with a GS-3 secretary on the telephone, telling an officer he or she is being recommended for court-martial, or thanking someone for a job well done, a leader follows three basic rules: 'Praise in public and criticize in private,' 'Treat others as you wish to be treated,' and 'Don't lose your temper.'"¹¹

⁹ John Schroyer, "AFA Cadets Get to Scream at Generals," *Colorado Springs Gazette*, 25 Jun 2014, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NRwOLwBIyQ0> (accessed 16 April 2015).

¹⁰ COL Henry W. "Kodak" Horton, "Thirteen Traits of Effective Leaders," in *Concepts for Air Force Leadership - AU-24*, ed. Richard I. Lester PhD, (Maxwell Air Force Base, AL: Air University Press, 2001), 247.

¹¹ Horton, "Thirteen Traits of Effective Leaders," 247.

Using this definition of respect as the benchmark for what is expected of Cadets once they are commissioned into the Air Force, there is a clear disjuncture between the identity presented to basic Cadets during initial training—through emphasis on hyper-masculine corrective techniques such as shouting and physical penalties—by their training cadre, and the leadership expected of them once they graduate.

RECOMMENDATION 3 - The Academy should reassess the identity that is presented to Cadets by senior classes to ascertain its congruity with what is expected of them as commissioned officers in the US Air Force.

Policy observation 4 - The identity that is subsequently performed as Cadets progress through the Academy is incongruent with the realization of a diverse institution

This is linked with the previous observation. This analysis has posited basic training as a period of “primary socialization” in the Goffmanian sense.¹² As argued in Chapter Four, this prompts the individual to assume the views of a generalized other, and the near-total social exclusion of basic training means that the majority of these views are presented by the senior class. For Basic Cadets, the absence of external reference effectively means that the identities that are presented *become* reality. Thus the cadre of senior training Cadets holds a great deal of power in molding the construction of ideal military identities among the basic Cadets. When a senior Cadet reprimands the tardiness of “Basics” by intoning “We’ve got females who are already outside... That’s pathetic,” this contributes to the stock of views that the new recruits assemble in order to construct an ideal identity.¹³ In this case, the implication is that females, divergent from the ideal identity, are expected to perform to an inferior standard and the male Cadets should strive harder to prove their ability to more closely replicate the ideal.

As Butler’s theory of performativity suggests, the explicit—and often, as in the case above, implicit—celebration of the hyper-masculine, male, athletic, Christian warrior during basic training reinforces this ideal to the extent that it becomes the dominant paradigm. It is likely that the low levels of minority participation at the Academy are both

¹² Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality : A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge*, (London, UK : Penguin, 1967), 130.

¹³ Diana Schemo, *Skies to Conquer : A Year Inside the Air Force Academy*, (Hoboken, N.J. : John Wiley & Sons, 2010), 65.

a symptom and a cause of this paradigm. Put more simply, the pervasive nature of the dominant identity is able to endure due to the sheer numbers of Cadets who embody most of the specific traits, but it is also the co-option of the identity by minority members, in a performative sense, that assists in reinforcing its dominance.

Viewed in this light, building a diverse and inclusive institution requires more than merely increasing the numbers of minority members. Indeed, methods employed thus far, such as targeted recruitment strategies, suggest the insufficiency of relying on a “tipping point” to enact meaningful cultural change.

RECOMMENDATION 4 - The Academy should consider embedding diversity into its processes, instead of it remaining as an ancillary consideration. An example here might be to facilitate the worship of adherents to non-Christian religions by deconflicting training schedules such that there is no compulsion to choose between “the team” and their religion—as exemplified by the Jewish Cadet who abandoned her worship—for certain religions and not others. An equitable path could be to either quarantine all traditional religious worship periods, as is currently the case with Christian worship on Sunday mornings, or conversely, quarantine none. The current system clearly posits Christianity as the favored religion, given the fact that Sunday morning is free from training activities to facilitate worship. If the aim is to build true inclusion and diversity, rather than mere tolerance, institutional biases must be reconsidered. By moving beyond mere tolerance of minority groups, the Academy might better facilitate the emergence of “project identities” that could reduce the dominance of the current ideal identity, thus potentially facilitating a more inclusive and diverse Academy.¹⁴ It is acknowledged that this might present an unpalatable solution for those of the dominant identity, however the stark reality is that meaningful cultural change requires the consideration of difficult decisions.

Policy observation 5 – Diversity and inclusion should be viewed as a positive right.

As suggested in Chapter Four, the rights discourse often makes a distinction between positive rights, which imply an obligation for something to be done to be realized, and negative rights, in which the obligation is for *inaction* for the right to be realized. Unfortunately, viewing rights in a binary construct such as this has the potential to overlook

¹⁴ Manuel Castells, *The Power of Identity*, (Malden, MA : Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 8.

their hybrid nature. In many cases, there is an obligation on policy makers to both act and refrain from acting in order to ensure the provision of a right. This seems a reasonable approach to make when framing diversity policy. The recent repeal of the controversial “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” legislation removed the legal barrier to homosexual service in the armed services in the US. Through this lens, equality of participation regardless of sexual orientation might seem a negative right—once the law was repealed, the government had taken the necessary steps in bringing about the realization of the right. Intuition would suggest, however, that an organization that has legally discriminated against homosexuality for much of its existence has likely built a set of norms that reflect the societal attitudes that led to the legislation in the first place.¹⁵ In this case, much more work is needed to help create an inclusive environment, much of which requires positive action on the part of policy makers in creating frameworks that enshrine equal rights for all members regardless of sexual orientation, but also the military itself in re-assessing the identity of the organization to ensure that it is consistent with espoused principles of diversity and inclusivity.

It is this positive nature of the right to equal participation in the US military that should be a priority for Academy staff and Cadets. Legislative amendments are a crucial first step, and leadership at all levels must convey a consistent message that encourages the participation of all US citizens in the defense of the nation, regardless of sex, sexuality, ethnicity or religion. This was recently typified by the Secretary of the Air Force and the Chief of Staff of the US Air Force in their joint memoranda outlining the way forward for Air Force’s diversity policy. But while policy statements can help mold culture, they are not, of themselves, capable of *making* the change—what is required is positive action at the level where cultures are developed and reinforced. This thesis has argued that the construction of military identities in the process of basic training at the US Air Force Academy is such a place. This makes it a vital node for the realization of diversity and inclusion policy.

RECOMMENDATION 5 - By acknowledging the positive nature of inclusivity, the Academy should focus on identity construction as a crucial point at which inclusion

¹⁵ Rob Smith, “Opinion: Why Repealing ‘Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell’ isn’t Enough.” *CNN.com: In America: You Define America. What Defines You?*, <http://inamerica.blogs.cnn.com/2011/11/11/why-repealing-dont-ask-dont-tell-isnt-enough/> (accessed 14 April 2015).

and diversity are embedded in the fabric of what constitutes the ideal Airman, and take active steps to mold it in ways that resonate with recent initiatives outlined by the Secretary of the Air Force and the US Air Force Chief of Staff.

Policy observation 6 - The Air Force Academy emphasizes an incongruent “warrior” ideal

In his book, *With God on Our Side*, Michael Weinstein relates the story of a former Cadet who returns to the Academy for an orientation briefing with his son who had just received an appointment:

The whole thing set my teeth on edge, [...] Weida [then Brigadier General Weida, Commandant of Cadets] must have used the term *warrior* dozens of times. It was a message very different from the one we had received as Cadets. Back then, the emphasis was on leadership and the mission was clearly to train leaders. The intent wasn't just to produce good officers for the Air Force. [...] We weren't there just to learn the art of war. We were there to learn the arts of motivating and guiding and inspiring. That, in itself, was inspirational, and here that cherished idea was being replaced with all this saber-rattling rhetoric about the fierce determination and single-minded devotion and square-jawed, hard-assed swagger of some archetypal conqueror.¹⁶

As discussed in chapter four, the focus on all Airmen as “warriors” permeates the Air Force’s sense of identity, as is evident in the “Airman’s Creed,” but the concept sits somewhat uneasily in the Air Force.¹⁷ Unlike the Army, the vast majority of Air Force personnel conduct duties that support a relatively small number of active combatants. Of these, an even smaller number fulfil roles that fit the mold of a traditional warrior. Mobilizing the warrior ethos in the context of the Air Force is clearly intended to bind Air Force personnel in the pursuit of a shared goal, however, as I have argued in this thesis, the term is loaded with implications that serve to maintain the primacy of an exclusive identity. However well intentioned, deploying the model of a warrior as the template for Airmen risks marginalizing those who do not fit within the traditional boundaries.

RECOMMENDATION 6 - The Academy should consider reducing the emphasis on Air Force members as “warriors,” or at least reframe what this means in the con-

¹⁶ Micheal L. Weinstein and Davin Seay, *With God on Our Side : One Man’s War Against an Evangelical Coup in America’s Military*, (New York, NY : Thomas Dunne Books, 2006), 136-137.

¹⁷ General T. Michael Moseley, “CSAF Presents Airman’s Creed”, 25 April 2007, <http://www.seymourjohnson.af.mil/news/story.asp?id=123050352> (accessed 4 April 2015).

text of an Air Force officer. The traditional image of a warrior carries a connotation of hyper-masculinity that jars with the concept of a diverse and inclusive workplace. It is acknowledged that the intention is to create a sense of cohesion within an organization that shares the responsibility for state-sanctioned violence, however, as distinct from the Army, the numbers of personnel that actually conduct the type of warfare that fits the popular definition of the warrior are comparatively few. Thus the warrior ideal is not only an incongruous metaphor in an instrumental sense, it also encapsulates the hyper-masculine male identity that this thesis argues should be re-framed.

Summary

Although this project has sought to present some practical initiatives that might support the realization of recent diversity policy statements, the fact remains that enacting meaningful and enduring cultural change is difficult. This is true of any organization, but it is especially apt in the case of the military. Through millennia of development, the culture of the profession of arms has hardened in certain areas, and the relatively recent removal of barriers to minority participation should be seen only as an enabler for cultural change processes to begin. As this thesis has argued, equality of opportunity should be viewed primarily as a positive right. This suggests an obligation on the part of *all* relevant stakeholders, including policy makers, the military and the broader public, to act in support of the establishment of a diverse military.

The main argument of this thesis has been that the period of identity construction in basic training is a key nexus where enduring attitudes and presented ideals coalesce, resulting in nascent behavioral norms that are reinforced over time. In Chapter Two I presented the view of LTGEN Peter Leahy (Rtd), who posited that problematic attitudes evident in Academy Cadets are primarily “brought” to the institution. However, framing the construction of identity through the lens of Goffman and Butler suggests that military culture plays a strong role in presenting and reinforcing behavioral norms that serve to exclude and stymie diversity. To this end, I suggest that the low levels of minority representation at the Academy are a result of exclusive identities that are created from the moment new Cadets arrive, and therefore largely “taught” through presentation, and subsequently “caught” through performance.

As an oppositional construct, identity has the potential to reinforce apparent difference if not managed effectively. The particularity of an ideal identity that broadly encompasses the traditional American warrior attributes of the hyper-masculine, athletic, Christian male, serves to exclude a number of minority groups, who are then incentivized to replicate the ideal in order to fit in. Unfortunately, such inauthentic replications of the dominant identity are often held to a comparatively lower value, or at the very least viewed differently: “I know a lot of people who...still have a problem with women being here. Not outwardly, it’s not as if anybody would walk up to a girl and say ‘you shouldn’t be here,’ but I think they’re judged a little bit more harshly in their leadership positions, because [you’re], (A): a push over, or...for want of a better word...pardon my French...a bitch. And so I think it’s very rare that a female has the same leeway as a man might...from my experience, the criticism in general is a little bit more aggravated if you’re a woman.”¹⁸

This thesis has presented evidence to support the assertion that the dominant identity affects the extant degree of diversity at the Academy on numerous levels that permeate externally and have influence even before minority Cadets have applied for entry.

The arguments presented in this analysis have been deliberately grounded in theoretical frameworks, and it is acknowledged that this work might attract the criticism of being overly idealistic and not grounded in “reality.” These are valid criticisms; however, they fail to appreciate the imperative for novel solutions in the realm of cultural change. As the quantitative data clearly shows, the US Air Force continues to project a broadly homogenous image, despite years of tinkering and policy initiatives. Over and above the instrumental benefits to diversity, a military that reflects the society it serves has the potential to enjoy greater legitimacy and goodwill by constituting an organization that symbolically represents *all* of society. Moreover, as a Western liberal democracy, the United States must reinforce its core values by ensuring that all Americans, regardless of sex, religion, ethnicity or sexuality, have an equal opportunity to serve in the defense of their country, and do so in an inclusive environment that embraces rather than pillories their difference.

¹⁸ Female senior Cadet, Focus Group with Air Force Academy Cadets, 24 February 2015.

TOPICS FOR INTERVIEW AND FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS

‘Branding Icarus: The Construction of Identity and Diversity in Three Air Forces.’

INTERVIEWS/FOCUS GROUPS WITH CADETS

1. Background prior to joining the military
2. Motivation for joining the military
3. Perceptions of the ‘ideal’ Airman prior to enlistment/appointment
4. Did any role model(s) inspire your joining?
 - a. Do you have any role models now that you have joined?
5. Experience of initial recruit training
 - a. Did it meet expectations?
 - b. Did it modify your idea of (3)?
 - c. Feelings of belonging/exclusion during the training?
 - d. Feelings of belonging/exclusion after the training?
 - e. Reference to current operations/adversaries (eg insurgents/terrorists) in the course of the training. i.e. Were you encouraged to view yourself as part of ‘something bigger’ as a member of the RAAF/RAF/USAF?
6. Perceptions of unit/service identity following training
7. Views on the necessary elements that contribute to (or detract from) unit cohesion,
8. Groups of people who you think have trouble fitting into the military?
9. Groups you would feel uncomfortable serving with?
10. Do you think any of your peers feel uncomfortable serving with certain groups?
 - a. What groups?
11. Representation and the military – how closely should the military reflect society?

12. Does religion have a place in the military?
 - a. If not, why?
 - b. If so, in what circumstances?
13. Experience/awareness of diversity within the military.
14. How do you see the organisation (officer training unit) in 10 years time?
 - a. Diversity levels?
 - b. Sense of identity?

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION WITH STAFF AT ACADEMIES/OFFICER TRAINING UNIT

1. Awareness of preconceived notions/attitudes in relation to military identity in the Cadets on arrival at the Academy? i.e. Is there a tendency for Cadets to 'bring' some of their sense of identity with them?
2. What training programs exist to develop a military 'mindset' among the Cadets?
 - a. What approach does this training take? e.g. Sociological, psychological.
3. What difference do you see in the Cadets' sense of military identity and cohesion by the time they graduate?
4. Is there a congruence between the identities inculcated at the academy, and those that permeate the 'wider' air force?
5. How has the philosophy behind the creation of identity in the military evolved over your time in the service?
6. What do you see as the factors that contribute to the behaviors exhibited in recent scandals in military academies?
7. Can you think of any barriers that exist to the equitable participation of minority groups in the academy?
8. What are some of the challenges presented by staff trying to encourage the development of positive normative behaviors in the military?
9. How diverse would you say the academy is?

- a. Do you think this has any effect on the organization? i.e. Would a more or less diverse organization operate differently?
 - b. Do you see any benefit to having a unit that reflects society's demographic?
10. How do you see the organisation in 10 years time?
- a. Diversity levels?
 - b. Sense of identity?



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